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#93

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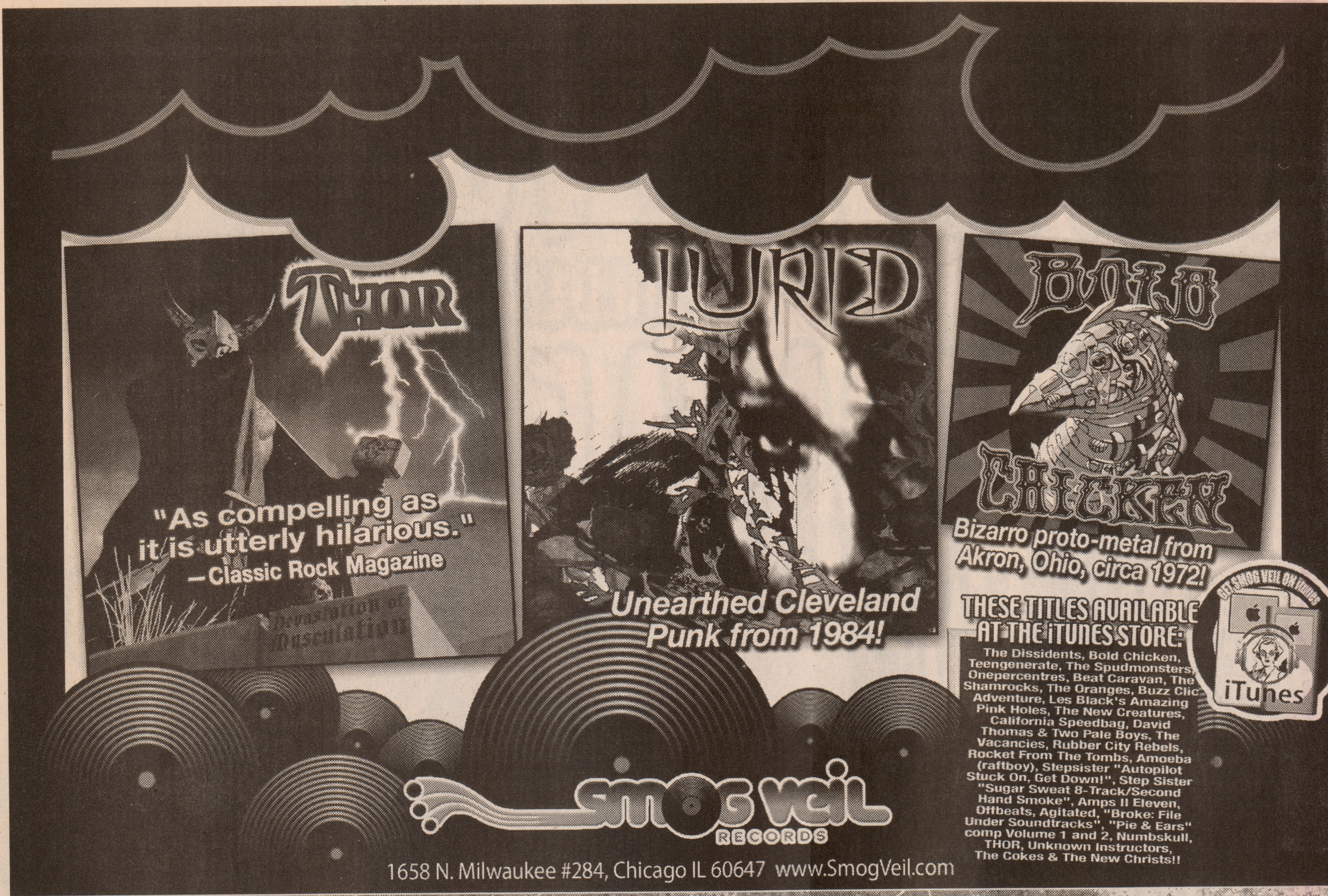
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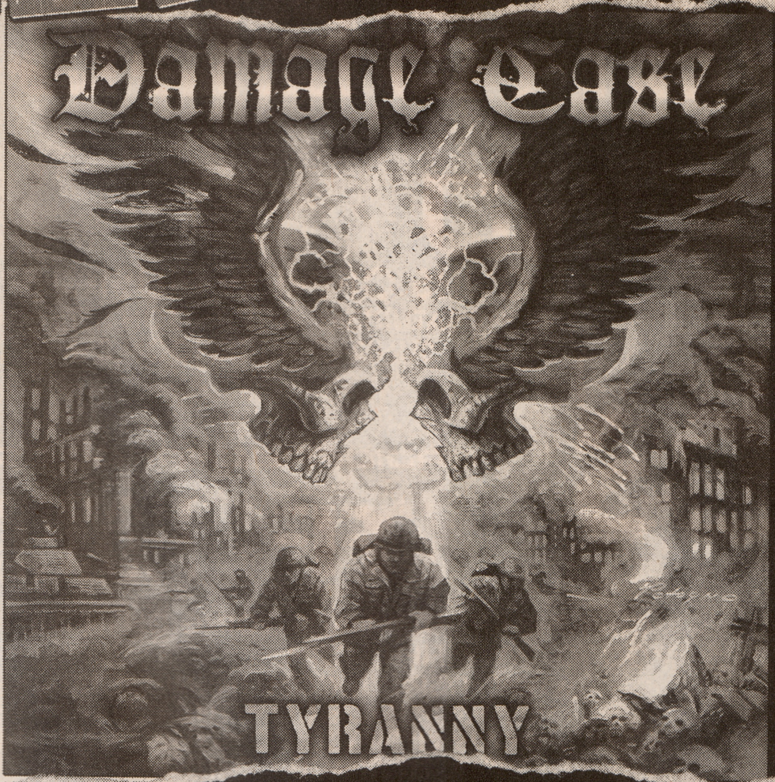

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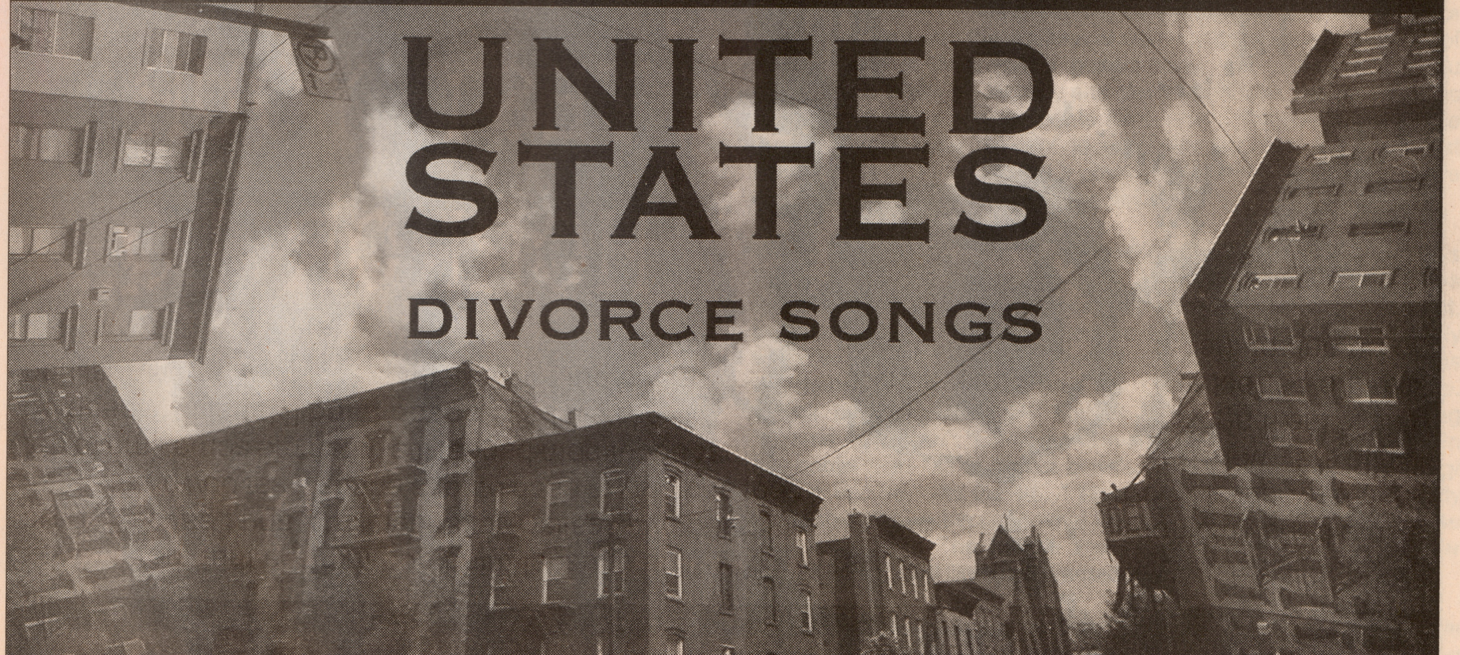

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## DISTRIBUTION

Under the Volcano is FREE on Long Island and sold around the country at independent record shops, in chains like Tower Records, online through sites like Interpunk or distros like Get Hip. Stores or distros interested in stocking UNDER THE VOLCANO should email boss@underthevolcano.net to arrange free drop offs on Long Island, or ask about cheap bulk rates for indie stores outside of Long Island.

# From the Editor

Rich Black

Psst...

I'm kind of embarrassed.

I can't take it anymore, and I really need to tell someone. Hopefully you don't mind my unloading this on you. Thanks, I knew you'd understand--you're always there when I need someone to talk to.

I've been living a nightmare for the last month or so, through every waking moment. Sometimes, I even find myself unable to sleep.

My head is bursting with ugly images and horrible sounds. It's relentless, a wall of awful noise with little variation in tone--it's almost like hearing the signal for the Emergency Broadcast Network, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Actually, that would be a relief.

As it stands now, I can barely function. I'm a zombie, a shell of my former happy-go-lucky (dare I say charming?) self.

It started when I was watching *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, and first saw the commercial for a compilation CD called Buzz Ballads. The commercial features snippets of tracks from bands like Lifehouse, Staind and Counting Crows. Since then, I've probably caught this commercial 100 times over the last month while watching Comedy Central, which is one of three channels that works on my television.

So, now the snippets are stuck in my head--in the same order as in the commercial. Not whole songs, thank god, just snippets. Over and over and over. Actually, it's the commercial itself that's been drilled into my skull. Yuck.

You can't imagine the horror.

## WANNA SEND US AN INTERVIEW?

*Under the Volcano* is looking for high-quality interviews to publish. There is NO PAY involved. We like many genres of music, but Punk and Hardcore are generally what set our loins on fire, and we're ONLY interested in bands that have a CD available through national distributors. Email us first about your interview ideas. We'll require hearing the band first of course, and have some simple guidelines once you get the go-ahead. Remember, there are no guarantees—we're kind of dicks about the right "mix" of bands for a particular issue, and hafta REALLY like what a band is doing to run a feature. Please DON'T approach us about features on bands from Long Island, as we already have 'em covered.

## INTERNSHIPS

*Under the Volcano* is always looking for bright, motivated, and slightly masochistic people to create and or/fill unrewarding, unglamourous, non-paying intern positions (we are NOT looking for writers) in exchange for college credit! English, Communications or Marketing majors are encouraged to apply, and you DON'T have to live on Long Island. If ya wanna get involved, email a proposal detailing STEP BY STEP ideas for new programs or projects (including how you intend to implement them ) or however else you'd like to contribute to boss@underthevolcano.net with "INTERNS" in the subject header. Please also include a 300 word statement explaining WHY ya wanna work with *Under the Volcano*, along with your contact info.

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# Columns

## MODEL CITIZEN

### GREG GROOVY

I figured if you can't beat them, join 'em.

Rather than being like a lot of my white Anglo contemporaries who chime in on the illegal worker debate by imagining the struggle and strife that a lot of the illegals who work in this country face, or regurgitating a tale about what adversity my own relatives faced three generations ago when they got off the boat, I went and got myself a magnificently low-paying job.

I'm making vegan sandwiches, rolling out gluten-free pitas, tortillas, dicing veggies, gyros, vegan seitan and a whole long list of other really healthy food, all for the reasonable rate of seven bucks an hour plus tips. The tips are actually "community" tips, and divided up among all the other low wagers at the end of the pay week. Now here's the kicker: most of the sandwiches I make fall in the range of $5.99 and up. So, technically, I really couldn't afford to eat there if I wanted to.

Very upscale clientele come into the place to eat. There's all the down and out immaculate mohawks (wink wink), bleachy dye-jobbed fag bangs with Taking Back Sunday shirts who drop in to let out their most prissy rebel yell. I was there less than a week before some "skinhead" showing off his Fred Perry wanted to match wits with me—which I was okay with, since I have a pretty accurate account of things, and I've bled for the cause. I've been knocked out, spat on, even set aflame (which is a long story to explain) for my shaved noggin. I didn't buy the lifestyle from a catalog.

So it's a hundred degrees outside and a hundred more in front of the baking ovens. Factor in that I'm a fat bastard that still hasn't adjusted to this high altitude, and the end product is I'm miserable and way off my game. Every muscle in my body is dehydrated and literally feels like dried, rotting rope. I figure I've only been here a few more months, so maybe the best thing to come out of the experience is a column or two.

I **do** miss my old lunatic boss, who apparently set off for southern Florida a few months after I left New York. Apparently, with me long out of the picture, there was no longer a fall guy to place blame on, and people who didn't want to swallow the truth had a nice heaping porno-sized gob launched down their throats. They can't say I didn't tell them so. Though, I do wish the nut job the best, really I do (no I don't). I hope that she doesn't run into any more talking refrigerators or other chatty appliances. And I hope that her cat doesn't try to strike up any more conversations with her.

Anyway, a change of subject (poor transition, I know). I find myself walking up these stairs that lead to a nice view of the surrounding tundra. I'm three and a half miles above sea level. An hour or so prior I was with my girlfriend, Melissa, at a much more reasonable altitude drinking it up and watching France play Brazil in the World Cup. There was a table of yuppie know-it-alls that felt Brazil was the team to go with—they ate that one. Anyway, the two 20oz. glasses of Black and Brown and fish sandwich are kicking in. A step further to the top and I'm trying to figure out whether the turtle is sticking his head out of the shell, or I just need to rip an SBD on some unsuspecting passersby. The chatter of foreign dialogue is amazing. Technically, I'm in a locale that most people would consider to be the middle of nowhere, but foreign tongues are as rich as if I were on the Circle Line cruising up the Hudson.

I should back track a little. It's 4th of July weekend. All the family travelers are in Estes Park walking around, looking for the best three for $10 t-shirt shop. A few miles up the road is Rocky Mountain National Park, which you would think would be packed with people since any idiot can go to some town anywhere in the country and sit at a Starbuck's and gaze at all the other idiots. That wasn't the case.

It seems a lot people roll into town to for a glimpse of the Stanley Hotel, which is where Stephen King was inspired to write *The Shining*. I imagine the place was a lot creepier when there was only a two lane road rolling in and out of town, but that's no longer the case. What spooky view do you get from the Stanley? Well, within a short walking distance is a Safeway food store and a bunch of condominiums. Really, really spooky.

Anyway, back to the mountains and the tundra...

Like I said, it's July 4th weekend, and there's still snow in the mountains. My fat ass is functioning rather pathetically in the high altitude. As we're driving up the road, alongside of us comes some guy pedaling on his bicycle and not showing an ounce of wear. The thought that I really need to lay off the Black and Browns and red meat rolls by as he crosses over the top of the mountain and is well out of sight as we just start to crawl over the bend as well. He vanishes, and we don't see him for the rest of the journey. Amazing.

If anything profound came from the experience it was witnessing the storms roll in and out of the mountains and bouncing between freezing air and running into a nice steamy hot sun shower... Watching the elk and marmots that get hassled by all the would be *National Geographic* photographers... and people wonder why the animals trample them from time to time. A national park isn't a petting zoo or a circus...

## LIP

### KEITH THOMSON

**FUCK YOU. PAY ME!**

I've spent years working in the restaurant/bars as my "survival job." I've done it all: bussed tables, bar backed, waited tables, bartended and managed. I'm over-qualified for most bar jobs, and prefer to just work the bar, where I have the most experience and I'm exceptionally good. Often people who interview me wonder why I haven't "moved on with my career," which is utter bullshit. Restaurant/club managing is a sucker's game. The bartender tends to make more money with less overall responsibility, but that's the way it is. Restaurant managers don't usually have the intelligence, insight and experience of someone who's dragged themselves up the chain and landed behind the bar. And, obviously, the business has been a survival job for me, not a passion I must pursue. Yeah, I'll admit it—I'm biding my time until something better comes along. I mean, that's the goal right?

It amazes me how many of the people I've interviewed with just don't want someone to make money. One guy called me to interview for a management job at a new, high profile, trendy, club in Manhattan. The motherfucker called me and was downright rude to me on the phone. I was actually thinking, " This guy's a dick already, so why would I bother to show up for an interview?" We briefly discussed how much I would "need" to be a manager. He didn't like the figure I threw out, told me, "This is a good opportunity to...."

I don't recall what the rest of that sentence was, but no matter. I know what it means. A "good opportunity" in the trendy restaurant business means that he was looking for some young, impressionable stooge to work 60 hours a week for $40,000 a year and no health benefits. A "good opportunity" means the person who takes that job can tell his friends that he works at this "in" place and be surrounded by hot chicks who'll never fuck him. But there's always that hope...so some jerk off'll do it. To that club owner (or whatever his title) I say "Fuck You. Pay me!"

I also interviewed for a new, neighborhood restaurant in Brooklyn Heights, just a walk from my apartment. It sounded perfect. I live in the neighborhood, that's the clientele they're going for, so...perfect.

The manger was a youngish guy, presumably from a former Soviet Bloc. He had a slightly staccato cadence in his speech and cold, Eastern European eyes. He told me that the wait staff and bartender would be pooling. This means that all tips go together, and at the end of the night they are divided up evenly. I've heard of this being done before, but only when the restaurant is offering benefits. Not the case here though. This former busboy had worked his way up into a management position, but never made it behind the bar because he wasn't good looking enough, or tall enough, or smart enough, or he didn't have an athletic agility, or the ability to multi-task and problem solve. Essentially, he was jealous of bartenders. He told me his projected numbers of what the bartender could expect to make, $300-$400 a week! What? As a bartender in New York City?! Does he **know** he's in New York City?! Does he know what it costs to live here? And again, that isn't a defined figure because you cultivate a clientele and make your opportunities. He exposed himself by saying "I know that might not be what you need to make but..." He trailed off, but he essentially admitted that he was stifling a bartender's earning potential. To that guy I say, "Good luck, DICK! You're not gonna have that job for long. Communism didn't work. Remember?"

So I'm sweatin' a little, rubbing two nickels together hoping they turn into a quarter so I can buy the four dollar lunch special at the Chinese place around the corner. I'll bide my time a little longer to maintain some self-respect. In the end I believe my good karma will prevail, and I'll get by just fine without pricks like that.

# THROUGH A GRRL'S EYES

### KELLIE BYH

For the last couple of months I was really trying to quit my job and find another job. I wanted to change things around in my life, get a new start and maybe have some extra money. And two weeks ago, I **did** quit my job, but not for the reasons I was hoping to.

I woke up Tuesday morning running late to work (as usual) and checked my computer to find a message from my friend Matt asking me if I was going to the diner. I had no clue what he was talking about, and when I told him that, he gave me the bad news that my boss had passed away that morning. I lost it at that point, and about two minutes later another co-worker was at the door to pick me up to meet up with everyone. I was in disbelief until I got there and saw the lost look on everyone's faces. Our boss wasn't just our boss—she was like our mother.

The next couple of days were the hardest days I've had in my entire life. Most of us quit that place because of how the higher ups were handling the whole situation. It was the first mass resignation I was part of, and it felt really good. Even though I knew I was going to be broke, my integrity was a little more important. I got to see what money can do to some people, and it was a real eye opener. I wish that something different could have happened to help me learn all the things I've learned from this, but I guess it's nice to know that some good can come out of horrible situations.

I know that I'm no different than anyone in wishing I could go back and try to fix what needed fixing, but I know that I can't. I can take everything I've learned and hopefully make a difference down the road. Fuck greedy people and their inability to be human—I hope their businesses fail and they die even more unhappy than they were going to anyway!

**RIP Mary Venezia**

# FARGO?

### BRYAN GROB

## A VOICE FROM RADIO FREE FARGO

Two hours from now I'll be sitting in a booth at the Empire Bar down on Broadway here in good ol' Fargo, North Dakota, contemplating my existence in a town known for its winters from hell and for the words *oot* and *aboot*. I didn't even think the movie *Fargo* was that good. To make it worse, I can't recall meeting anyone who actually talks that way. I guess another mainstream movie has lied and tried to generalize a portion of the population they thought wouldn't notice—imagine that. But we **did** notice, and for a person like myself who talks to people from all over the country on nearly a daily basis, I get to deal with it and answer the same question for the 19,046th time: NO WE DON"T FUCKIN TALK LIKE THAT!

Now that **that's** out of the way, I can continue. Fargo, as a whole, beats the shit out of 99% of the communities I have visited, lived in or heard about. New York is still a little more inviting than Fargo, but not by much. New York has the *Village Voice* to speak for its artistic and musical population; we have the *High Plains Reader*, a newspaper over 10 years old that has created a niche for itself in the so-called conservative state of North Dakota—and which has kept from selling out in any which way at all. New York has (at least for the moment,) CBGB's amongst the numerous venues in your neck of the woods. We have the Aquarium, which hosts bands like The Sword, Akimbo and 2 Live Crew. We also have the Nestor, which hosts quite a bit of the "hippie" bands that sound like Phish, along with a big portion of our local original scene and unique artists like the Hellblinki Sextet—though over the next few month the Nestor will be giving the Aquarium a run for its money as being THE original music venue in town. We also have our commercial free alternative radio station 105.9FM KNDS (RadioFreeFargo) that's more of a screaming point for the voices of music, art, society and the fact that NOT EVERYONE LIKES NICKELBACK, than airwaves for the mindless. KNDS, along with the *High Plains Reader* have become voices for the community in ways that are unbelievable.

While yes, Fargo is a smaller community (we have around 200,000 residents now), and it **does** have those pesky problems like being a clean city, low cost of living, and low crime rates, in Fargo's defense there are some great bars that have the most amazing drink specials and kick ass music almost every night of the week. Not to mention our local band scene... Necktie Suicide, Battle at Sea, Les Dirty Frenchman... there are so many bands in the Fargo Music scene, the list is almost endless and polarizing in its talent, strength and creativity. Am I trying to say, move to Fargo, North Dakota? Fuck no. What I **am** saying is that we do in fact have a scene that's a viable entity unto itself, and it's about time some of you outside of the city limits hear our voice. But stay at home, where you are right now and view it from afar on the internet, on the radio (radiofreefargo.com)—don't move here. You might drive up the drink prices, and we can't have that!

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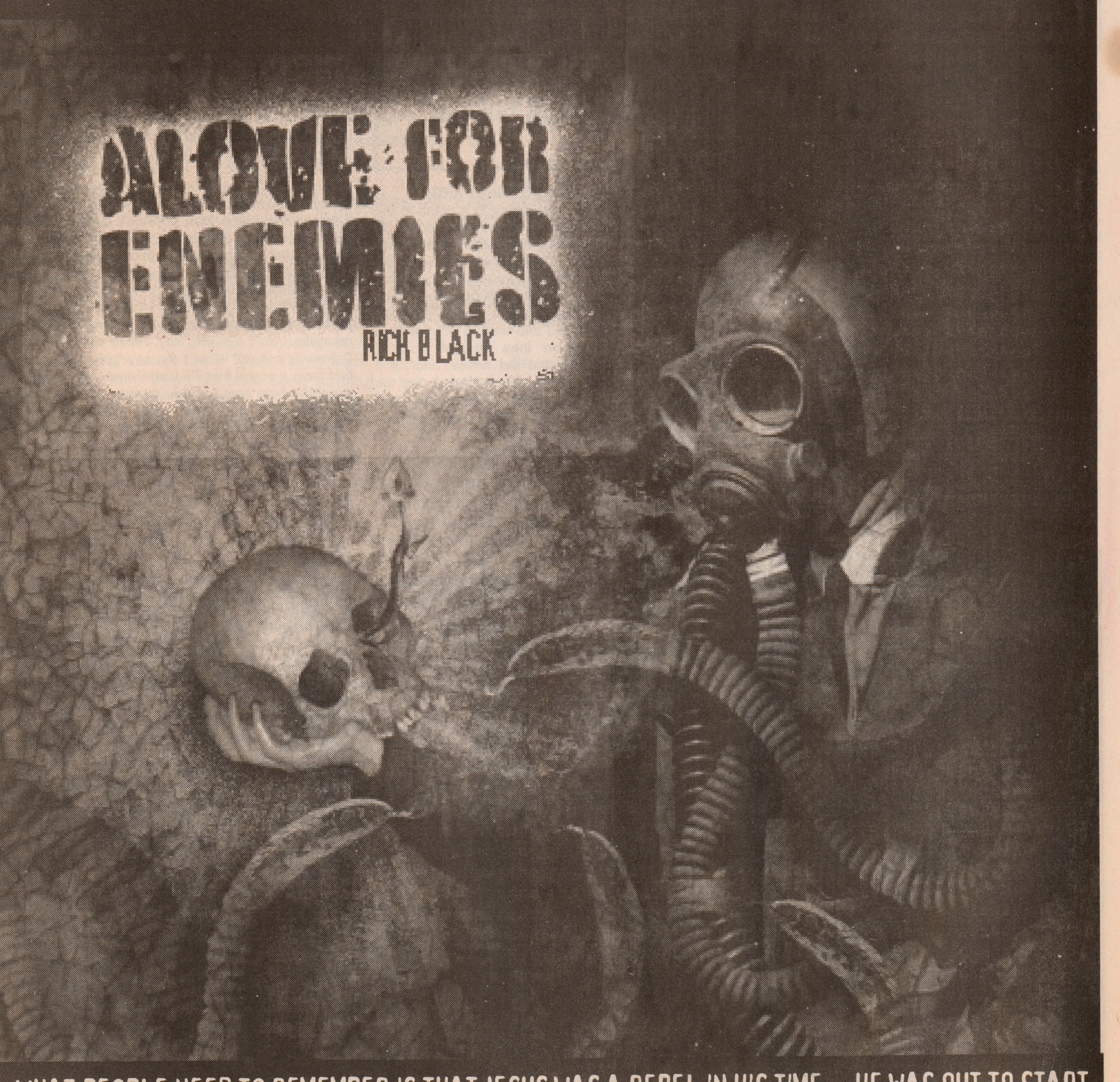
**Alove For Enemies, from Long Island, mixes skull-crushing Hardcore/Metal with the fire and brimstone of a backwoods sermon. On their latest full-length, Resistance [Facedown], the band roars right to the heart of the matter, but still manage to give big props to the Man upstairs—-and no, I'm not talking about your landlord. Vocalist Erich Barto graciously answered my questions from his laptop on the road.**

# ALOVE FOR ENEMIES

RICK BLACK



WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO REMEMBER IS THAT JESUS WAS A REBEL IN HIS TIME--HE WAS OUT TO START A REVOLUTION, IN A WAY. HE ALSO HUNG OUT AND MINISTERED TO EVERYONE. THE "CHRISTIAN" RIGHT THAT WE'VE MENTIONED IS WHAT WE SEE AS THE PEOPLE WHO HATE HOMOSEXUALS AND BOMB ABORTION CLINICS, WHICH IS NOT WHAT JESUS WOULD DO AT ALL.

Under the Volcano: What are some of the things that have happened to the band between releasing *The Harvest* and *Resistance*? Guitarist Bill Meis left the band, right? What happened there?
Erich Barto: Bill moved on to work at Facedown Records, he was called to do that, and there are no hard feelings. We added our longtime friend Luke [Anthony] on bass and Matt [Maddeo] moved over to guitar. It was a very natural transition, and we started writing together right away. *Resistance* was written with an enthusiasm that was like a breath of fresh air.
UTV: For the first few months of the band's existence, Alove For Enemies played shows at churches, then a bit later got on Hardcore shows at other venues. Were you intentionally trying to play only shows at churches at first? Then, if so, what changed your mind?
Erich Barto: No, we weren't doing that intentionally; it just took a while for us to break out into regular shows. Once we did, the scene at home was very accepting and supportive. They respect who we are, and we never forced anything on anyone.
UTV: You toured for two months with Anterrabae. How does a Christian band deal with being on the road with guys that have a song called "Shit Happens When You Party Naked"? What would Jesus do?
Erich Barto: [laughs] That's a good question. Anterrabae are great dudes-we had a blast on that tour. Jesus would hang out with anyone and He fellow-shipped with all sorts of people. So, we do the same-we don't judge other bands, ever. They're our friends, and we just had a great time.
UTV: You're on tour right now with War of Ages. Being that War of Ages is also a Christian Hardcore band, are there things the two bands might do on tour they might not do while touring with non-Christians?
Erich Barto: We share a common foundation as far as how we deal with things; other than that, there are no crazy rituals or anything. But, it's nice to have some people other than your own band to go to and talk about things. Other than that, it's just the same as touring with anyone else.
UTV: For instance, might the bands hold prayer meetings together, or maybe even fuck shit up together in strange new ways? A lot of bands come up with "games" to relieve themselves of the boredom between shows. What games have you come up with, if any?
Erich Barto: We're planning on doing a bible study, actually. As far as games [laughs], we're also on tour with Imperial, and those dudes know how to have fun-they always come up with crazy sport challenges. Like, for example, throwing a football through a huge monster truck tire like 40 yards away--everyone got in line and just kept going 'til finally someone got it. They also include football and pirate-themed group mosh sessions at shows [laughs].
UTV: Is the cover art for *Resistance* a play on Hamlet addressing the skull of Yorick?
Erich Barto: No, but that's an interesting comparison. The artwork that Dave Quiggle did is amazing. The skull represents death, as does the poison gas--hence the gas mask. The rose represents life, and life is resisting death. The layout inside touches more on that. Also, the rose can represent Christ's resurrection, which is a defiance to both Satan and death. I hope that makes sense.
UTV: *Resistance* still has some of the apocalyptic imagery also found on *The Harvest*, but *Resistance* comes across as being more militant in its lyrical tone. Is the band evolving into a Christian version of Earth Crisis?
Erich Barto: [laughs] I'm not gonna lie--I'm all about that Earth Crisis comparison. We're not afraid to be who we are, and my lyrics are certainly not militant towards non-Christians or anything; I'm just passionate about what I'm singing about. A lot of the songs are addressing corporations' involvement with Hardcore, and the brainwashing of kids in the scene to act a certain way, etc., while other songs are really personal topics.
UTV: Would it bother you personally if people started referring to Alove For Enemies as "that militant Christian Hardcore band"?
Erich Barto: I guess it might bother me if people referred to us in that way, only 'cause we aren't out to force anything on anyone. But, we are very blunt about who we are, so I allow the Earth Crisis reference [laughs].
UTV: How did the song "EC-10" get its title?
Erich Barto: Actually, there is a movie called *Equilibrium*, about a futuristic society whose population is controlled by an emotion-inhibiting drug. The idea is that human emotion is the cause of all war, murder, etc. So, things that might inspire emotion such as art, music and film are all rated "EC-10" for "Emotional Content." The idea here is that, the music industry itself never lets a band with passionate beliefs get too far because they are afraid of what it might do, who it might offend, etc. The duality in the song is about how our band itself has been knocked down quite a few times, and we just pick ourselves up and keep going.
UTV: Can you please go into the situations that inspired "Call It Faith" and "Not Without Incident" a little more? I feel these songs share some similar sentiments...am I wrong?
Erich Barto: Well, "Call It Faith" is about the supposed Christian bands who only admit to being Christian when it's to their benefit. And once they start to get big, they deny being a Christian band. Or, my personal favorite, they'll say they're a Christian band, then five minutes later, say they're "Christians in a band...." It's sad, really. I respect any band who takes a stand on anything, no matter what it is. If you don't wanna take a stand on anything, that's fine too. But if you decide to be something, do it don't be wishy-washy about it.

"Not Without Incident" is more about the industry feeding the kids lies. Lies about how to dress, what is cool, how they should act, etc. It's meant as an encouragement for kids to be aware of what's going on around them.

UTV: In the lyrics there are references to an empire crumbling. Which empire are you referring to?

Erich Barto: This is a duality. On one hand it's Satan and his rule over the earth, which, according to our beliefs, will be taken from him by Jesus. And it also is another reference to the corporations' supposed rule over Hardcore, which will not last long either.

UTV: In past interviews, you've been careful to distinguish the band members' spiritual beliefs from those espoused by what's become known as The Christian Right. Can you perhaps give me some examples of what you mean by that?

Erich Barto: What people need to remember is that Jesus was a rebel in his time--He was out to start a revolution, in a way. He also hung out and ministered to everyone. The "Christian" Right that we've mentioned is what we see as the people who hate homosexuals and bomb abortion clinics, which is not what Jesus would do AT ALL. And they make our job harder by making asses of themselves on a daily basis. We are not religious; we believe in a personal relationship with Jesus. That's the difference between being spiritual and being religious.

UTV: This morning, Israel is bombing the crap outta Lebanon in the hopes of ultimately eradicating Hezbollah, and Hezbollah is returning fire, allegedly with missiles supplied by Iran and Syria. Is the very real possibility of World War III erupting in the Middle East something that makes you feel sad for humanity, or something that fills you with the hope of a new age rising from the devastation?

Erich Barto: Well, it's terrible that this is all happening, and that that region has be at war for as long as time. It does make me, sad for sure. According to the book of *Revelation*, this is all supposed to happen, and when there is finally complete peace over there, then that is a sign of the end times. So, it's very depressing no matter how you look at it.

UTV: Please tell me where you are right now. Look out the nearest window, please describe what you see, and tell me how you feel about it.

Erich Barto: [laughs] We're in Kentucky at a hotel. Out the window are houses, and you can see the heat displacement coming off the roofs. That makes me angry because I hate the heat. I'm a winter person, and knowing in about 10 minutes I have to go out to the van which is probably 100 degrees is not cool at all! X

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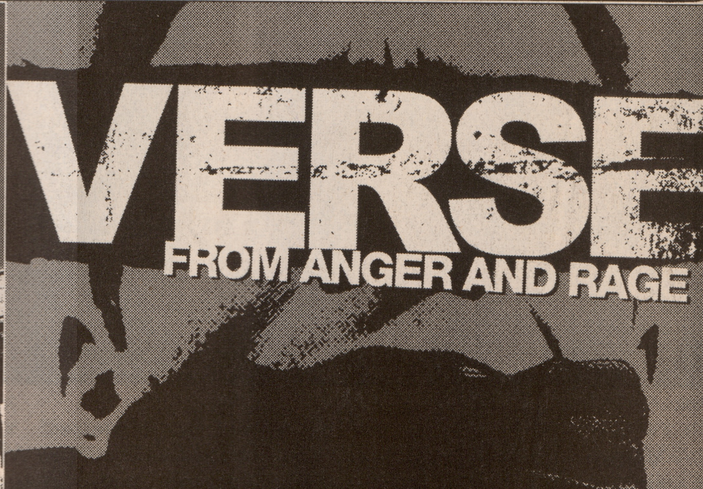
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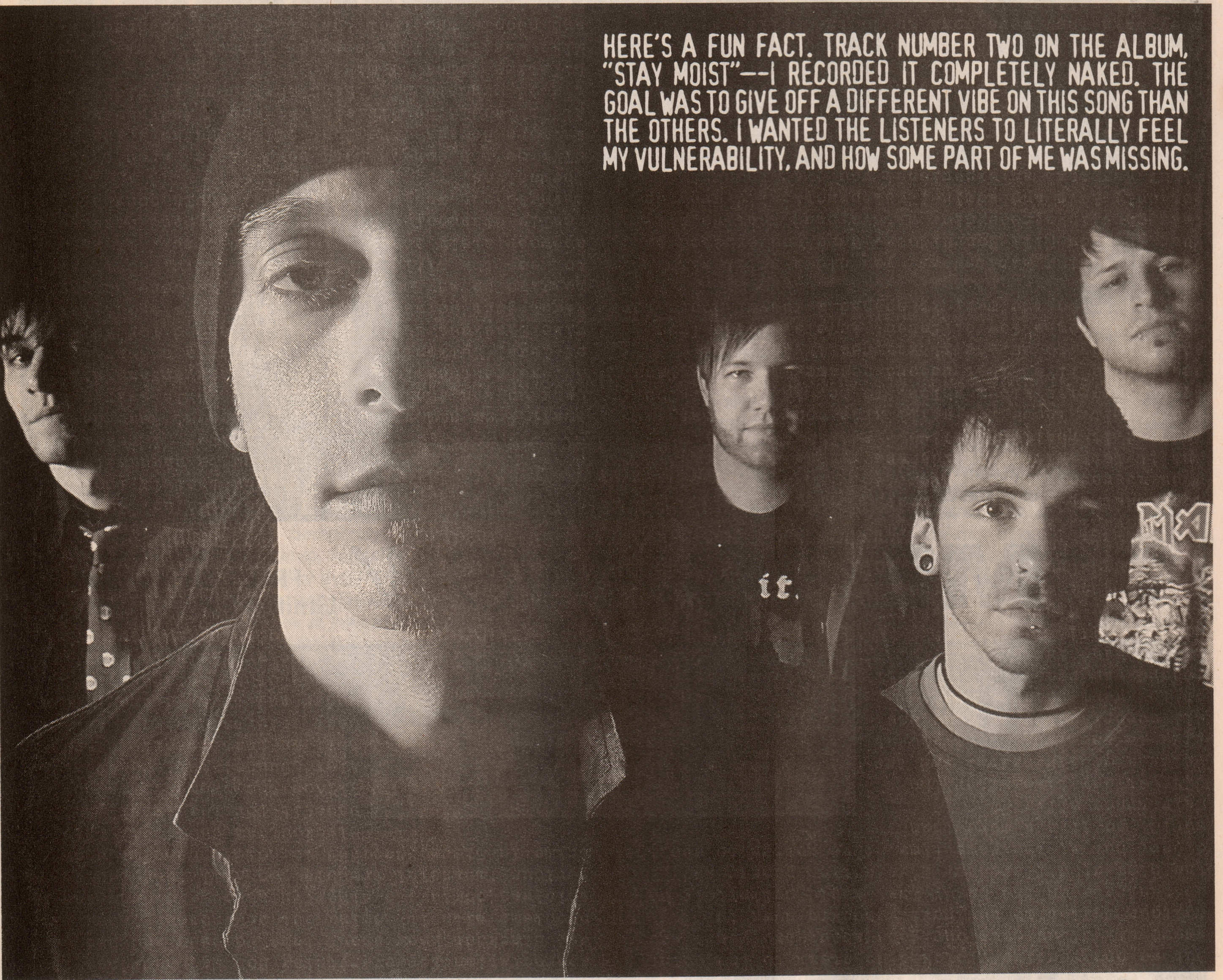


HERE'S A FUN FACT. TRACK NUMBER TWO ON THE ALBUM, "STAY MOIST"--I RECORDED IT COMPLETELY NAKED. THE GOAL WAS TO GIVE OFF A DIFFERENT VIBE ON THIS SONG THAN THE OTHERS. I WANTED THE LISTENERS TO LITERALLY FEEL MY VULNERABILITY, AND HOW SOME PART OF ME WAS MISSING.

*Photo: Keith Kiiroja*

Vocalist Erik Boccio bellows, "You don't know where I've been!" as the rest of the band rips into "Pink and Tender" like a pack of rabid dogs. It's both a beautiful and horrifying moment, one where the scent of lavender is overwhelmed by the vile stench of raw sewage and the realization that something is very, very fucked up. All only seconds into the first track.

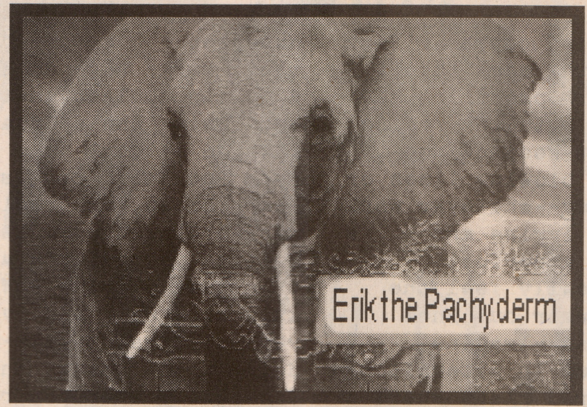
Anterrabae's second full-length, **And Our Heart Beat In Our Fingertips, Without Reason** [Triple Crown/EastWest] is full of moments like those—ones brimming with the kind of anger that makes you want to stab something and watch it bleed in slow motion. And, rather than offering relief, the quieter passages are just another way of staring at the thing that lives in the abyss. It's big. It's ugly. And it's hungry.

Boccio and guitarist Ryan Poelker gave me some insight into two of the personalities behind one of this year's best records. It ain't pretty, but that's life. You've been warned.

**Under the Volcano:** The past year and a half has been one of both upheaval for Anterrabae, with vocalist Neal Carter leaving and Erik Boccio stepping in. I think you're also on your third drummer now, correct? Was there ever a point where the band's future was in doubt, or was the band even more determined to continue?

**Ryan Poelker:** I'd like to think that we are just as determined now as we were from the beginning, when we decided that being in a band and touring is what we want to do. But, I will add that it has been extremely hard to stay determined with all the member changes we have been through. Losing our singer was the first blow, and shortly after, long-time drummer Chris Gleason decided to call it quits to pursue a more stable career. He was replaced by Chris Gougliamo, who we were very happy with until he unexpectedly quit to join Bayside and left us hanging a week before a big tour.

We finally recruited Eric Montalvo, and we couldn't be happier with. Hopefully this is the last of our lineup changes and we can move forward without any problems.


Erik the Pachyderm

**UTV:** Erik, how'd you end up on vocal duties? What were some of your thoughts, expectations and strategies replacing the frontman for an already established band?

**Erik Boccio:** Right after Kid Gorgeous broke up I said to myself "I live in Buffalo, what the hell am I thinking?" So I packed my shit and moved straight to New York without a plan. Well, I must have gotten lucky because within two weeks I started working with some good people and we put out like 100 music videos in the Hardcore/Metal genre in less than two years. Doing videos for all these bands started giving me the itch to sing again, so I replied to a post Anterrabae had put out looking for a vocalist. Before I knew it, I was out on Long Island, practicing like twice a week.

Prior to writing to these guys, I'd seen the name Anterrabae around but I have to admit, I had never actually heard them before. I dug their old stuff when I listened, but what really interested me was the new sound they were working at, which becomes apparent on the new album. I understand that change is always disappointing to the fans, but being part of something fresh meant much more to me than picking up where someone else left off.

**UTV:** So, after this period of upheaval you go into the studio and emerge with one of the best albums of the year. On *And Our Heart Beat...* it's obvious that you've pushed boundaries on this record, on many levels. How did your approach to recording this one differ to your approach for *Shakedown Tonight*?

**Ryan Poelker:** Best album of the year, huh? I'm sure some might disagree with you, but I will thank you for that kind statement, sir. I can't speak for everyone else, but when we wrote *Shakedown Tonight*, I personally had a hard time with our process in song writing. I think it was in a way immature and messy, but worked for us at the time. For *And Our Heat Beat...* I really shoved song structure in everyone's faces. Although everyone probably wanted to kill me at some point, all of our ideas came together to create a very well put together album that we're all very pleased with. In addition, we had a lot of help this time around. Justin Beck produced three of the tracks with the help of John Florencio--they helped in the "Shit-Filtering" process of throwing away the unnecessary garbage and molding what was left into what you hear on the record. Working with them was an amazing experience, and definitely added to the sound of the record. Also helping to do that was George Fullan from General Studios, where most of the album was recorded. He has a great ear for what works and what doesn't, and the album would not have sounded as great without his assistance.

**UTV:** There's a much darker, even more misanthropic tone on this record than on the previous. How many goats were sacrificed in the making of this album? Was there chicken blood involved?

**Erik Boccio:** Here's a fun fact. Track number two on the album, "Stay Moist"--I recorded it completely naked. The goal was to give off a different vibe on this song than the others. I wanted the listeners to literally feel my vulnerability, and how some part of me was missing. I had to stand behind this tiny sound wall which barely covered my masculinity while listening to the band and George, the engineer, complain about how my nipples were distracting them. It was a totally new experience for me considering I had to physically hold my cock and balls to keep them from banging against the mic stand. I really started getting into it during the breakdown and completely lost my grip. If you listen really closely, you can actually hear the manly thumping of cock on steel--go listen to the song right now. You'll never feel the same again. True story.

**UTV:** There are images of wild animals running throughout the CD booklet. Is there any deep, philosophical meaning behind these? It's not often I come across a guy with an elephant's head.

**Erik Boccio:** Throughout the album we do mention bull elephants, birds and serpents, but there's really something deeper going on within the artwork. Our design guy did an amazing job, and I urge everyone to take a closer look.

As far as the cover goes, that's actually an elephant head transplanted onto my body. We know that cloning has come a long way since Dolly the sheep [the first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell] and human/animal hybrids are soon to be the latest in biotechnological advances. The band is one thing, but for me, pachyderms are a passion within themselves, and that passion thrives on a 24 square acre baby elephant orphanage located in the illustrious hills of the central Sri Lankan landscape. There's a story to be told.

UTV: Can you tell me a bit about the inspiration for "Pink and Tender"? I get these kinda lurid pictures in my head...wait, I ALWAYS have those pictures in my head. Well, back to inspiration, yeah, that was the question...

Erik Boccio: Cruisin' for trim, of course. "Pink and Tender" was originally nothing more than a poem I had written a while back. Some might say that the words don't really fit with the raging music considering it's not about keeping the scene alive, or rocking out and blowing lines or slaying whores that did you wrong--whatever works for you. If you really read the lyrics and visualize what I'm saying, it's a perfect metaphor for being able to basically feel the negative space of what is no longer but once meant so much. Consider emptiness--imagine standing in the house you grew up in after it had burned to the ground, or a scoured place where a village was before a flood erased all trace--a physical absence that still lives on inside of you. Apply the same formula to ordinary corrupt human love. So, like I said, crusin' for trim.

UTV: I was listening to "It Takes More Than Metal to Move A Bull" yesterday, and my friend said it was the best Atreyu song he'd ever heard. Shall I call him an asshole for you?

Ryan Poelker: Just call him an asshole and maybe give him a little slap because we sound nothing like Atreyu anyway. At least I don't think so.

UTV: Tell me about the last time you were fucked without being kissed, as the line in "It Takes More Than Metal to Move A Bull" mentions.

Erik Boccio: We've all been in this situation. Whether you're a 16 year old kid moshing to Atreyu in his bedroom, huffing Dust-Off cans while masturbating to shemale internet porn, or some Armani wearing Wall St. exec dropping two Gs a week on Craigslist hookers... or, how about two homeless guys going down on each other in an alley? Ride the wave.

UTV: Some of the lyrics for "The Filthy Habits of Ex. Lovers" are at first hard to distinguish, except for the word MOTHERFUCKER spat out very clearly. Do you kiss your mother with that mouth?

Erik Boccio: This is an excellent opportunity to tell my mother that I love her. This past March, Lifetime--not the band, but the network for women--did a reality show about me and it actually featured an Anterrabae performance, for the six of you that caught it. During my covert, *Real World*-esque, confessional booth-style interviews, I insulted my mother several times, and she was pretty upset about that. So here's my chance to say, I'm sorry Mom...for telling it like it is.

UTV: Despite my possessing an indescribable sexual magnetism, I'm a virgin that frequently finds himself playing checkers, doing laundry or unsuccessfully begging for sex in the buff. Tell me what kinda "Shit Happens When You Party Naked."

Ryan Poelker: Well, to be honest, I think that question is best left unanswered. The kind of shit that happens when you party naked is a very touchy subject--or shall I say, dangerous topic. For one to fully grasp the concept of the shit that goes down when you party naked, you must first be prepared to undergo very painful tests of endurance of the mind. I really can't say anymore on that topic.

UTV: To me, it seems that we're once again experiencing a wave of Long Island bands making their marks beyond our immediate area. Barring complete nuclear annihilation or a tsunami swallowing the sandbar we call home, how long can this go on for?

Ryan Poelker: Long Island, for the past five years or so, has really set the bar for hardworking bands. It was good to see these bands getting recognition and doing something other then just playing VFW halls every weekend to the same kids over and over. But, to be honest, I've recently lost track--there are so many new bands doing great things that I just can't keep up. Especially when you're out on tour, it's hard to stay in tune with what's going on in your area. I hope more bands continue to make it past the shores of the Island and show the rest of the country what we're made of. I guess that's my poor attempt at a pep talk for upcoming bands.

UTV: In closing, please tell me what your favorite color is, and what that color means to you.

Ryan Poelker: I'm going to have to go with black. I feel that black is deep and meaningful, and helps to express inner anguish and frustration...Who the fuck am I kidding? I'm a fat kid, so I like to wear black because it makes me feel less fat. But we all know that's a lie anyway.

Erik Boccio: Surf's up, faggots. X

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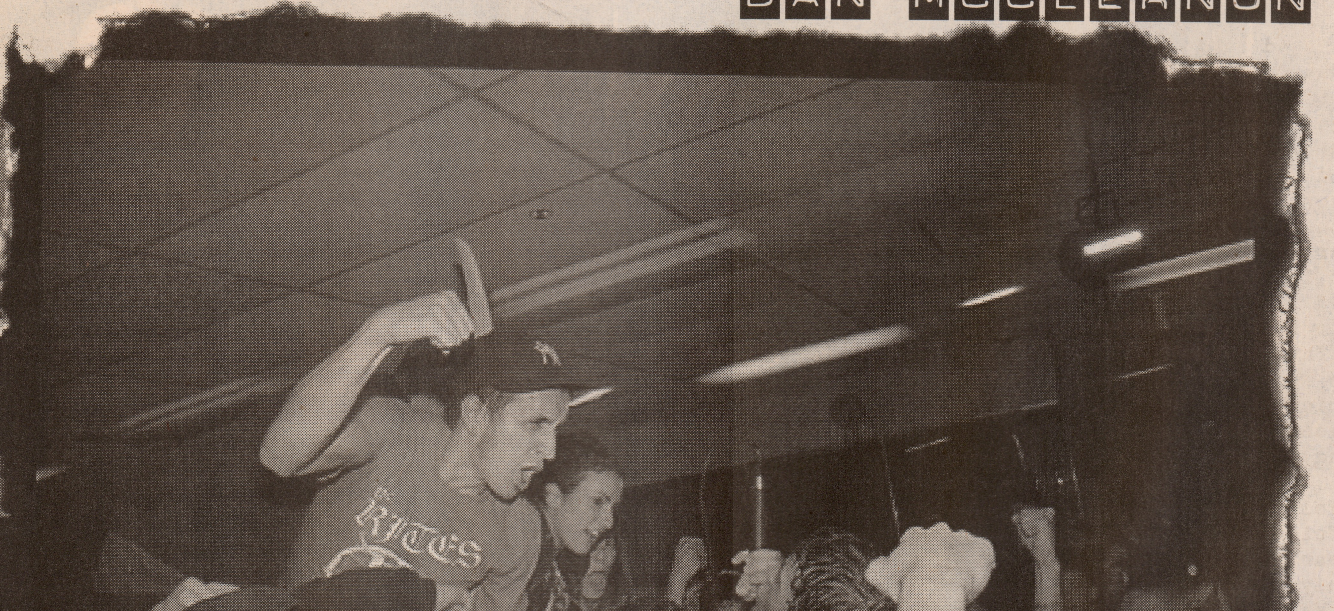
# CRIME IN STEREO

### DAN MCCLERNON



**Long Island's Crime In Stereo are back! Several years after the release of their phenomenal full-length debut, Explosives and the Will to Use Them, the band has unleased The Troubled Stateside [Nitro], their best material to date. The Troubled Stateside is the logical extension of Explosives... albeit is a little more mature, has a few midtempo songs thrown in for good measure, and is a whole lot of rockin' for one disc to handle. Crime In Stereo are one of the few melodic Hardcore bands that matter, and it's my pleasure to bring these cats into your home once again. Bassist Mike Musilli fielded my questions.**

Under the Volcano: When we last spoke, it was shortly after the release of your debut album. If you could, tell me what you think the biggest difference in your lives is between now and then?

Mike Musilli: The biggest difference for me is that since then I've quit my job to focus on this band full-time. When *Explosives...* came out, we were touring lightly and doing a lot of weekend stuff. But we progressively picked up steam to the point where all of us quit our jobs about two years ago to tour full-time and really buckle down to concentrate on the band. That would definitely be the biggest difference. I've gotten poorer and older, but at the same time, I've gotten to see the world, so it's a more than fair trade off.

UTV: At any time after the release of *Explosives and the Will to Use Them*, were you at all surprised by its success or the warm reception the record was receiving, as well as the band in general?

Mike Musilli: I was completely blown away by it. We were just psyched to be recording a record at all, so for kids to embrace it the way they did was awesome. I know that it wasn't the most popular record or anything, but it felt like the kids who enjoyed it really, really took to it. There are still kids who call that their favorite album which, to me, is insane. The people who liked that record became life long fans and friends to us, so it was really a great experience on a few different levels. Aside from putting us on the map, it opened a lot of doors for us.

UTV: Following *Explosives...* you did a split with your friends Kill Your Idols. Were you excited to take part in a recording with a band that we all not only love and admire, but practically grew up with? Was that an experience you ever thought possible?

Mike Musilli: Doing the split with the Kill Your Idols dudes was totally amazing. Those guys have been a part of our band since day one. They showed us the ropes, got us our first out of state shows, and just really helped us out in so many ways. When they said they were down to do the split, we couldn't believe it. It was awesome because they had such a hands-on part in helping Crime In Stereo grow and become something more than a local band. The split was a great way to share our love with them. Brian KYI is a great friend of mine, and has helped me out a whole lot. We've had a ton of conversations about touring, relationships, being in a band--just situations that only certain people could understand, and he really encouraged me and the band to get out there and give it a shot. Kill Your Idols is a big part of our success and they know that, so it was amazing to share that release with them.

UTV: Your final recording for Blackout is a four-song EP called, *The Contract*. The title leads me to believe that this record was not released with your best intentions in mind. If you feel comfortable, could you tell us a little about the situation that took place between you and Blackout?

Mike Musilli: That recording was actually intended to be released on Walk All Night Records. Our friend, Bob Mac, started that label up and was looking to put some things out by his friend's bands. He had done a ton for Crime In Stereo, and we wanted to return the favor by giving him a release for his fledgling label. The original name for the release was *Love*, in recognition of our appreciation for everything Bob Mac had done for us. Blackout knew about this release and had no problems with it coming out on another label. As this was coming together, Blackout Records was in serious financial trouble. So Kill Your Idols and Crime In Stereo decided to hold a benefit show for Blackout at CBGBs. At this benefit for the label, Bill Wilson the owner comes up to Alex [Dunne, guitar] and I to tell us that despite everyone's best efforts Blackout is going under and that we are free to pursue other interests. So, here we are thinking that we're free from Blackout and everything is cool to go for the Walk All Night release.

Around this time, Nitro starts talking to us and a few weeks later things became serious between us. So I tell Bill Wilson that it looks like we're going to sign with Nitro. Not a day later, I receive an email from him stating that Blackout Records is back up and running and he wants "his fair share." So, we're then forced to get a lawyer and all sorts of legal bullshit ensues. We settle on having to give Blackout the recording intended for Walk All Night just so we can sign to Nitro without having to give up any money. Obviously we were not going to keep the title for the EP as *Love*, so it was appropriately changed to *The Contract*. It was a really disappointing time for the band because it changed our whole view of how labels conduct themselves.

UTV: So the song, "Long Song Titles Aren't Cool Anymore Because the Rest of You Fuckers Are No Good At It" would be directed at whom? And who would be a good example of a band that does it right? Lifetime comes to mind.

Mike Musilli: That song is directed towards bands and people who feel that they need to dress a certain way and write certain types of lyrics in order to get ahead in music. For us, that's the polar opposite of what we--as people and as a band--are about. Crime In Stereo is very hard on itself in terms of lyrics and we don't settle for anything that we think is subpar. As far as dress goes, we dress however the fuck we want, and it's more punk these days to dress like a regular guy than to have a fucking mohawk or wear a spiked belt. Just do what you want for you, not because you think it's the "right look" or the "right lyrics."

As far as a band who did it right, Lifetime is definitely a great example of a band who cultivated their own sound and didn't change for anyone. Modern Life Is War also comes to mind. Those dudes write some amazing music and completely rebel against the idea of "fashion first." They do what they do because they personally feel it's right; it just so happens that their music is amazing, and they're garnering serious attention now.

UTV: So for the new album, you decided to change labels and release it with Nitro. What was it about Nitro that made you choose them over any other prospective labels? And what's Dexter Holland like in person? Sorry, I'm an idiot.

Mike Musilli: Nitro seemed honestly interested in the band and we liked what they had to say. They offered us a chance to do some things we had never done before. They had the budget to give us a good push to get out on the road, get a vehicle that could run hard, and make a record with a real budget. It was really that simple. Dexter's a very laid back guy, he's really down to earth. We sat down with him and just talked about our goals for the band and stuff, and he was really supportive, so it was cool. He looks more like a soccer dad than a punker, but hey, the guy's pushing 45.

UTV: In your own mind, how does *The Troubled Stateside* compare to *Explosives…* in terms of songwriting, recording-wise, etc.?

Mike Musilli: In terms of songwriting and recording, I think that *The Troubled Stateside* is leaps and bounds more focused. We knew our way around the studio a lot more, and there was a clearer vision of what we wanted out of the record. I think *Explosives...* was more on the, "Hey, this is sick, we're recording a Hardcore record,"'tip, which was cool, but we didn't know what we were doing really. *The Troubled Stateside* is more intimate and explorative in terms of what the band could do to expand its sound and bring something new to the table, without losing sight of who we are as a band.

UTV: A lot of bands claim how mature they've become on their sophomore album, and to me that usually means that they've gone all soft and sucky. In your case however, while I do hear a lot of maturity as a band on *The Trouble Stateside*, I think any change here is nothing but positive. There's a little more melody and a few more midtempo tunes, but all in all, I think it's a better-crafted and solid record all around. Would you agree with any of these assumptions?

Mike Musilli: I do agree. When I first listened to the finished record in its entirety, I was a little worried because I thought it was a big jump from what we had done in the past and that it was a little soft. But, once I fell into a groove with it, I realized that it was some next level shit. For me, the lyrics on *The Troubled Stateside* are unmatched. I can say that because I take no part in writing them or anything like that. The entire record is completely personal and yet amazingly worldly. The people in my band are amazing at what they do, and they definitely challenged themselves during the recording of *The Troubled Stateside*; I think that shines through in the record. We stepped it up, for better or worse. The last thing the band would ever do is fall into a situation where we think we should write this or that. Part of what I love about Crime In Stereo is that we always add something to our sound with every recording. Nothing is ever the same as before, we're always exploring our sound and tweaking things here and there. It's a constant growth. *The Troubled Stateside* showed that we challenged ourselves to make an original record, maintaining our root sound, but building something new and better. I think we did that pretty well.

UTV: "I'm On the Guestlist, Motherfucker" seems like a pretty scathing commentary on the current Punk/Hardcore scene. Do you feel in some ways that the consumer-driven nature of the scene you grew up in is a serious problem? How much of this tune is simply tongue-in-cheek?

Mike Musilli: I think that song is little of both. Everyone in our band came up well before the wave of commercialization that we find ourselves in now, so we have a different perspective on it. Being in a touring band also give you a different perspective. I think that this music was not made for commercialization and it disappoints me that mainstream media has caught onto it. Yet, being in a touring band I understand why other band would make the jump. It's a harsh environment out there when you're touring and trying to make it work, so when some scumbag major label dude offers you the tools to do that, it can be hard to say no. Being in a band and dealing with labels you realize how shady things can get, and that's a lot of what the song is about too. You just have to keep an open mind about it, and know that there are bands out there who still offer kids a real Punk Hardcore ethic, if that's what you want. The mainstream is bastardizing certain aspects of our music but they can't take it all, so we don't worry about it.

UTV: As a Long Island band and long-time members of its scene, how does the current scene out here compare to times in the past, both recent and not so recent? Do you think the massive popularity of some of the bands out here have made it difficult to keep it tight-knit?

Mike Musilli: Long Island rules! We have the best scene, and the best kids, bottom line. The scene right now is thriving and as everyone knows, the scene goes in cycles, but we have something special on LI in that there are a lot of kids who stay the course when things get tough, and that's what has kept it together for so long. Kids on LI have a great perspective on the popularity of some of our bands too. They realize that it's okay to love a band like Brand New or Taking Back Sunday and to support the DIY scene. No one cares about petty shit like that anymore; if you want to come to a Kill Your Idols show wearing a Fall Out Boy shirt, whatever, you're here to support and that's cool. Everyone around the Island knows each other, and that makes it a very tight knit scene. Having toured with a lot of different bands, they all say Long Island shows a lot of love to bands who roll through. We appreciate what we have here, and it's just a ton of fun. So yeah, Long Island Hardcore is the shit!

UTV: I want to thank you guys again for taking time out to answer these questions. Good luck with the new record and hope to see you guys around soon.

Mike Musilli: Thanks a ton for always helping us out! X

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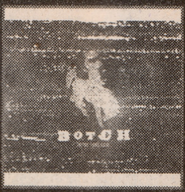

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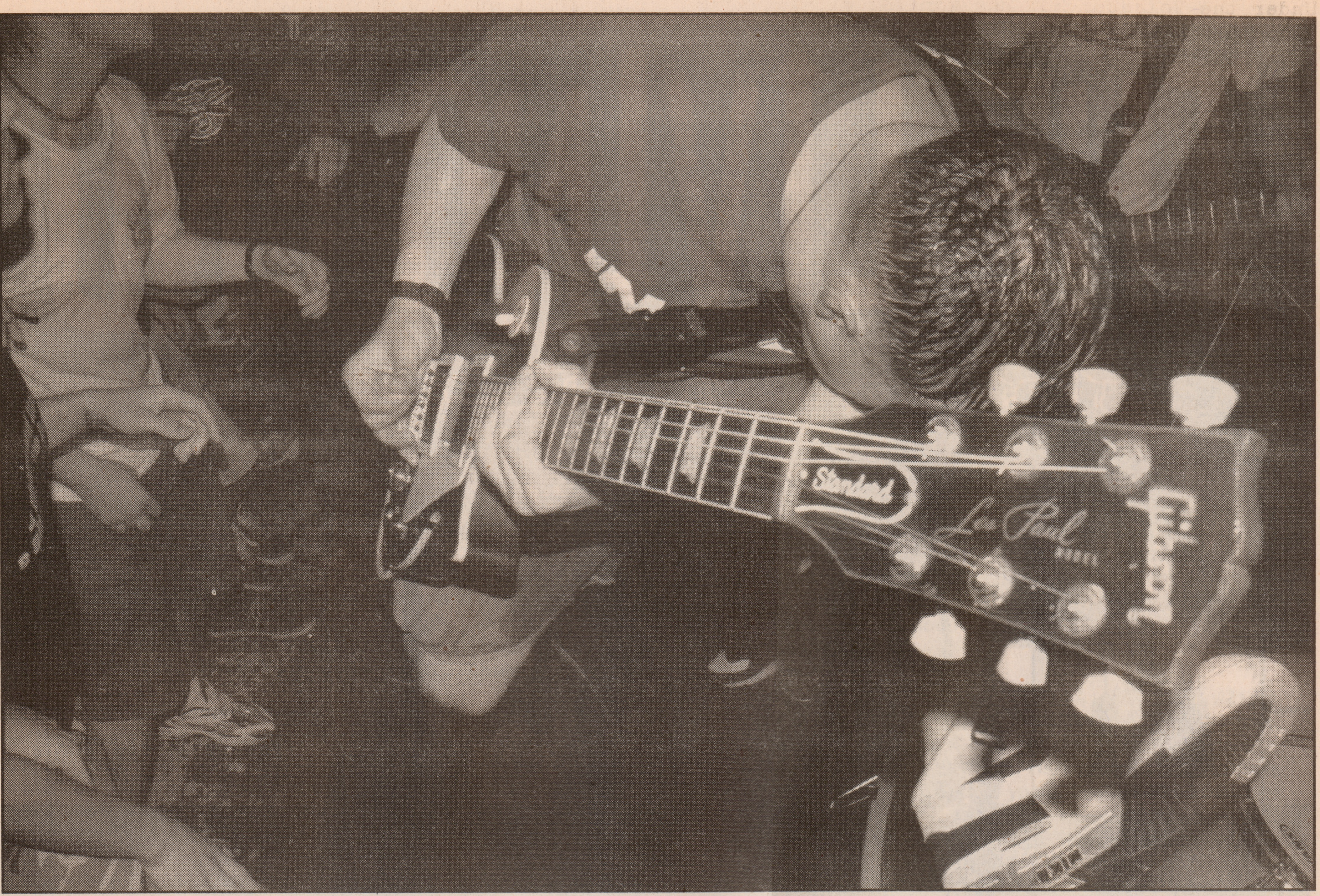
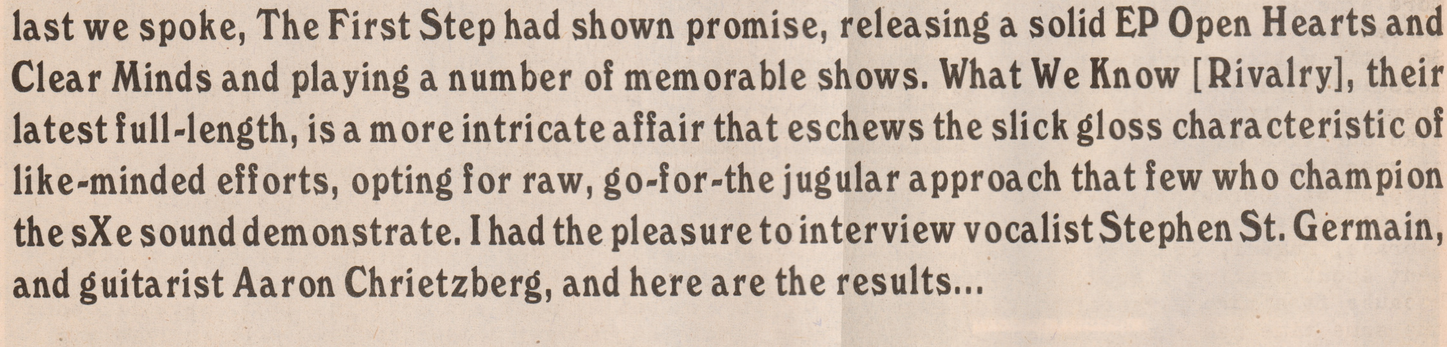


The spirit of '88 style Youth Crew lives on through bands like North Carolina's The First Step, who exemplify the vitality and idealism of a largely bygone era in Hardcore. When last we spoke, The First Step had shown promise, releasing a solid EP Open Hearts and Clear Minds and playing a number of memorable shows. What We Know [Rivalry], their latest full-length, is a more intricate affair that eschews the slick gloss characteristic of like-minded efforts, opting for raw, go-for-the jugular approach that few who champion the sXe sound demonstrate. I had the pleasure to interview vocalist Stephen St. Germain, and guitarist Aaron Chrietzberg, and here are the results...

# THE FIRST STEP

MIKE RAMEK



Under the Volcano: How has working with Rivalry Records proven thus far? Why the label shift from Livewire? What are some of the differences you've noticed between labels so far?

**Aaron Chrietzberg:** Rivalry has been awesome so far. We have known Kyle [Whitlow, owner] for a long time. His old band [The Damage Done] played a lot of shows with us on our first West Coast tour with Champion. He always supported us and checked us out when we came through. When we were looking for something new; we weren't sure where to go and what to do. He was really the most down-to-earth and connected to us, so we went with him.

It's been great so far. I personally think Hardcore music is at a weird spot with labels. A lot of people in bands, labels, booking agencies claim to be different than the industry because they are Hardcore kids. But I think a lot of band and labels end up BEHAVING just the same as the industry themselves. So it's nice to be working with someone who minds the dollars and cents but is still a friend, and who was moshing like crazy to us last weekend at Sound and Fury Fest!

UTV: What have been the most fundamental changes in sound and lyrical influence undergone since *Open Hearts and Clear Minds* was released?

**Aaron Chrietzberg:** The song writing is coming from the same place, but it's a little more our own thing. We felt like on *Open Hearts and Clear Minds* we kind of perfected what we were going for then, so it was time to do something fresh. We wanted to keep that classic late '80's Hardcore vibe that The First Step is known for, but kind of cover some new ground and make it our own. We had a little more of an early '80s influence. Most bands doing that right now go for the whole Negative Approach or SOA vibe but we wanted something a little more experimental like Minor Threat *Out of Step*, but for us. So, it's a little noisier, some melodies thrown in here and there. But, it's really more like our take on that progression.

WHENEVER I'VE BEEN AT A REALLY BAD SPOT IN LIFE I DON'T WANT IT TO STAY THAT WAY--I WANT TO SEE THAT LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. THAT'S WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO CONVEY, THAT WE ALL FEEL LIKE THIS, THAT WE AREN'T ALONE, IT TAKES HARD WORK, BUT THERE IS A LIGHT AT THE END OF A LOT OF SUFFERING.

Stephen St. Germain: I have been listening to a lot more Dischord stuff, lately especially Embrace, Fugazi, Ignition etc. and the way they went about writing a song really clicked with me because it's more personal in many ways but at the same time has a much more encompassing view of the world. While that has always been an influence on me and on The First Step it has more recently just spoken to me in a way that it didn't before. I guess I can relate to that better in a lot of ways. That said, writing lyrics/music that are in your face Hardcore but smart/introspective is still the goal.

UTV: How does *What We Know* how mark a progression over the band's past output? Please elaborate.

Stephen St. Germain: Lyrically we've grown a lot since our last record in terms of what we want to sing about and how we view things. I think previously we were a lot more black and white, like, "This is good, and this is bad." But, as we've grown as people, our view point towards a lot of things have changed, or how we would go about [things]. We have a song on *What We Know* called "Peace," and it's about the idea of peace and how it relates on an individual level, but also on a global level. With that song I was sick and tired of all the bloodshed and fighting in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Darfor and wanted to express that. But, rather than sing about the war, I wanted to sing about something that was the opposite: peace. I don't think I would have done that the same way previously.

UTV: The production on this effort is particularly good; it's extremely vibrant but also raw and rather punk sounding, lacking some of the gloss that other '88-style bands bring to the table. What kind of sound were you going for on this recording?

**Aaron Chrietzberg:** Well, we're always compared to Youth rew type bands, and that IS an influence on us but it's never been the only influence. On *Open Hearts...* we were really feeling that style, and you can hear it. Songs like "The Higher Taste" and "When Things Fall Apart" are very Youth of Today influenced. But songs like "Will It Ever End" have a Cro Mags type mosh. On *Open Hearts...* we wanted to be clean, and you can hear that in a lot of late '80s bands. But, we were always influenced by stuff like DYS *Brotherhood*, etc.--You can hear that on our demo for sure! We kind of just wanted to get back to that side of things a little. So that's what we did. Basically the core tracks are still pretty tight and clean as far as the rhythms but we just went for a more live sound and got noisier on guitar.

songs with a distinctively motivational bent on this new record. What was the impetus behind such songs as "Time To Understand", "Get Wise," Face the Pain" and "Take Control" off the new record?

Stephen St. Germain: Those songs aren't meant to be motivational. That wasn't the agenda with them, but I can totally see how they can come across that way. With songs like "Take Control" and "Face the Pain," our perspective is that life can really suck and drag you down. Face it, some of the hardest things to deal with in life are the pain of guilt, confusion/feeling lost and feeling powerless to stop the cycle you are in as a person. A lot of people talk about these feelings and just wallow in that misery. In those two songs we talk about feeling this stuff-'cause we all have in our own lives/ways--but we just don't want to glorify it or portray it as hopeless because it's not!

I mean, whenever I've been at a really bad spot in life I don't want to stay that way--I want to see that light at the end of the tunnel. That's what we are trying to convey, that we all feel this, that we aren't alone, it takes hard work, but there is a light at the end of a lot of suffering. So, we aren't trying to motivate people as much as write about how we feel and deal with pain, loss etc. The same goes for "Time to Understand" and "Get Wise." With "Time to Understand" we were just tired of people either making Straight Edge something that it wasn't--a haven for violence--or not taking it far enough as in being Straight Edge but doing a whole bunch of other fucked up stuff. We've always seen it as just a starting point and way of life, not something to separate you from others. I'm pretty sick of the shit that people try to attach to Hardcore or Straight Edge. I'm all for growth, of course, but that's not growth.

"Get Wise," in short, is just a song for me and everyone else that is just saying OPEN YOUR EYES 'cause there are a lot of problems out there that are bigger and much more important than what's on TV, the latest scene drama or buying new clothes. I find myself thinking about just myself in my own world, and not stepping outside of it actually to help people in need as much as I should. So, maybe this one is motivational! I do want myself and others to change--for the better!

UTV: I understand the band has undergone significant lineup shifts since the past release. What accounted for these lineup changes, and to what degree have such changes affected the band as a functioning whole?

Stephen St. Germain: We have had a real lineup shift. Right now it's Greg on bass, Aaron and Aram on guitar, me on vocals and Fred on drums. The new lineup is awesome, and it has really solidified us. For a while we felt like things were a bit in limbo, so it's good to have a solid foundation.

UTV: Since we last spoke, have any of the band members views on Straight Edge shifted in any fashion? If so, how has such change come about?

Aaron Chrietzberg: Well the song "Time to Understand" pretty much lays out our views on Straight Edge. My views on that relate to me. I do it because it makes sense to me, and I have no interest in intoxication, and I take that view to heart. But as for others, I don't feel the need to say what would work for someone else because I really don't know. I generally think that not a lot of good comes from certain things, but I think it's silly how some people assume that drinking would be the root of all evil. The song basically takes aim at people who take Straight Edge too far, or not far enough. You might know the types of people I'm referring to. To me, it's just a choice.

Stephen St. Germain: I don't think they've shifted as much as I've changed as a person. There was a time when I was much more outspoken and aggressive towards Straight Edge and I'm not that way anymore. I still think nothing good will come out of drinking/drugs, but people are people and I'm above no one, so that attitude of being better than people who weren't edge isn't something I feel anymore. Kind of like Aaron was saying---it's just a personal choice for me and I will talk to anyone about its merits, but I've also learned that becoming righteous, especially at a young age, has its pitfalls.

UTV: Have your beliefs in the Straight Edge lifestyle wavered or faltered over the years? To what degree? Can you give specific examples?

Aaron Chrietzberg: Well, like I was saying before, I might know that this is right for me, but I can't assume that it works for everyone. As people, we all seek happiness. I know that this helps me avoid certain situations that would make me unhappy; but, other people might not see it that way. Also, if some people attempted to be Straight Edge they might wind up miserable because of it! I still take Straight Edge to heart, and I know that it's been a good choice for me, and if it's the right thing for someone else, I trust it could help them too. When I was younger, I always thought this is the way things are, and I expected things out of people. Now I don't really feel that way--I can just appreciate them for who they are.

UTV: Do you feel that the Straight Edge lifestyle has provided solace from the sometimes cold and impersonal modern society we live in, has exacerbated the distance felt between you and the outside world, or both? Could you please elaborate?

Aaron Chrietzberg: Hmmm I think Hardcore music in general has always walked this fine line based on reality. In other words, you could see some crazy reality in the Hardcore scene or some fake shit pretty easily. I guess that's just life, not really Hardcore or Straight Edge.

Stephen St. Germain: No, I don't feel like Straight Edge has kept that part of life away-but it can't. Whether you drink or not, you're going to--at some point--feel alienated from your surroundings. The only thing that really makes that feeling of distance disappear, for me, is connections between the people around me.

UTV: Has the Edge--and the lifestyle that is its counterpart--influenced the manner in which the band members deal with notions of competition and materialism inherent in our society?

Stephen St. Germain: Yes and no. I think that being Straight Edge does not predispose you to a more forward-thinking life style. But, at the same time, being Straight Edge definitely made me think about my position in this world at a young age. That was the--no pun intended--first step to a greater view because if I care about my body and what goes in it, I should also care about other people, and animals, and so on. Eventually, the question comes up, "Why do I need things to make me happy?"

Aaron Chrietzberg: Life in general has influenced how I view competition and materialism; I'm not sure that "the Edge" has had anything to do with it! Seeing competition and materialism in the world can be a pretty big disappointment. However, well being and happiness can't be taken from someone else-- competition--and it can't be found merely in external phenomena--materialism. So, the good news is that while there is some common disappointment and disillusion in modern life, happiness can be found within! Be a lamp unto yourself!

**UTV:** With the increasing commercialization of Hardcore, is it the case that corresponding changes within the scene have affected the manner in which kids choose to approach the notion of community intrinsic to the sort of Hardcore that The First Step purveys? To what degree?

**Stephen St. Germain:** With Hardcore becoming so much more available and a lot of that personal touch [has been lost]--mix tapes from friends, borrowing records etc.--and the rise of Hardcore-esque style as hip, a lot of the message and ideas are lost over the music. Something that made Hardcore special and feel so vibrant was that shared experience: you were there because you didn't fit in elsewhere, and you had to seek out an alternative. That really did make it like a community that could work together to do really meaningful stuff. At the same time, there is the hope that a kid will still pick up a 4 Walls Falling record, a Champion record or Minor Threat, and they get something out of that message. When that happens, it doesn't matter how it used to be, because for that kid it's wide open-his or her life is different. There are always going to be kids who gravitate to the look over the substance, but there are also always going to be people searching for substance in their lives.

**UTV:** How do the members of The First Step choose to deal with the inter-scene drama pervasive in segments of modern Hardcore? To what degree has the seemingly endless litany of rumors, factions, and confrontations therein affected the band members?

Stephen St. Germain: We've dealt with our share of rumors and accusations. Most of the time we just walk the other way and ignore it because it's meaningless and shallow. We've had bands take shots at us. But people do stuff like that, not out of a desire to make some sort of change or stand up against what they disagree with, but as a stunt to get attention and notoriety. The thing is, people who use Hardcore to inflate their sense of self esteem are missing out on all this could be. Too bad for them.

UTV: To wrap things up, who are some of the current bands you've been listening to that don't get the credit or recognition of other outfits that enjoy greater hype?

Stephen St. Germain: The Geeks from South Korea, Fired Up from Connecticut, Go It Alone from British Columbia, Make or Break from Florida and Common Cause from Norway. All awesome bands that everyone should check out! But, seriously, don't believe the hype!

Aaron Chrietzberg: All hype is relative. X

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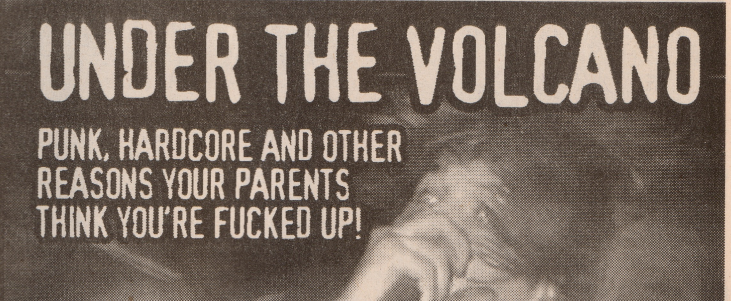

Hailing from north of the border, Canada's Kover is one of those bands that do the Hot Water Music and Small Brown Bike comparisons justice. While the band may be influenced by the aforementioned acts, they are no clones. On their debut full length, Assembly [Engineer], the band combines melodic Hardcore with raw Rock n' Roll guitar licks, coupled with vocals as gruff as those of Frankie Stubbs of Leatherface. I could say more, but I think I'll let guitarist/vocalist Ryan Mills speak for himself. What I will leave you with is a quote off their MySpace site describing the way they perceive themselves: "Foo Fighters meets Hot Water Music in the shower with Thin Lizzy and there's only one bar of soap, and that bar has been dropped!" 'Nuff said.

# KOVER

**DAN MCCLERNON**

Under the Volcano: While you guys have individually been playing out in bands for years, how exactly did Kover get together?

Ryan Mills: Awhile back, Kover began as a side project of my previous band. I recorded a solo EP under the name with great response. This was the kick Kover needed to push ahead as a full band. Everyone in Kover have been friends for years. At the collapse of our previous bands, we decided it was best to start from scratch, only this time with life-long friends. The band you hear now started with Jaye Schwarzer and I jamming together in the basement. Neal and Greg Lyons are brothers and were both pursuing their own band, but demanded more, like Jaye and I. The band was formed. UTV: What were some of the bands you each played in previously? If I remember correctly, some of you even experienced some minor success in the form of music videos and majors tours. And, what were some of the bad experiences you had in past musical endeavors that you have consciously tried to change in your attitude towards Kover?

Ryan Mills: I started a band years ago called Blue Skies At War. We had a good run, but with shitty management and no real financial help. The tours got harder, and the debts grew larger. We were the biggest Rock band in the world, but only to the five of us. The parties, booze and girls were great, but with all the stress of our lives on hold, the struggle broke us. Yes, we had a couple big tours. Yes, we had a couple videos. Luck wasn't on our side very often. We were almost killed out there on the road--if you want to ever hear the story I'm sure Alexisonfire could tell ya. Those guys looked like they saw ghosts when we escaped the wreckage. Jaye played in a badass Hardcore band called Hope to Die; they did some good tours as well. Greg did some Brit-Pop while Neal did the Punk Rock. They spawned local bands like Going Nowhere, and Heroes For Sale. With all the learning experiences in one pile, we decided it was best to keep open minds, jam with friends, and fill the musical void in our own lives.

UTV: In almost every review I've read on the band, Kover has been compared to bands such as Hot Water Music, Small Brown Bike and Seaweed. While it should be an honor to be compared to such stellar acts, do you ever get tired of being pigeon-holed like this? What are the positive and negative aspects of such comparisons?

Ryan Mills: I can see where these influences exist in our music, but I really don't hear anything but Kover. It's great, and definitely an honor to be tossed in a category with such great bands. I guess by pigeon-holing us into this group, people that aren't into these bands may be reluctant to grab the album. I do love the bands we are compared too, but we were the first to say "For fans of...." I listen to these bands probably more then the rest of the guys. The musical influence is much more diverse then what may appear. The double vocals make everyone jump to the Hot Water Music conclusion. Maybe the low tuning was from Small Brown Bike. Maybe guitar melodies and vocal hooks come from our Seaweed influence. Your guess is as good as mine. UTV: You recently released your debut album, *Assembly*, on Engineer Records. How did you hook up with them? What did Craig [Cirinelli] offer to the band that put his label ahead of the rest?

Ryan Mills: He offered us one hell of a breakfast when we went and played New Jersey. We hooked up with Craig through emails. The relationship started with talks of our favorite bands and trading music. Craig really liked what he was hearing, and with an album already recorded we decided the ease and comfort of working together was a must. We shook hands more or less, and began the journey together. Coming from an industry-tainted band, this "friendship first" indie style relationship was such a great feeling of purity. Craig offered his strong belief in Kover. That was all we needed.

UTV: One thing that stands out to me about *Assembly* is your knack for writing exceptional lyrics. Who does most of the songwriting and where do you garner most of your inspiration from?

Ryan Mills: Neal and I do quite a bit together, but also have our own songs. My style is paint the picture as vividly as possible. I take from my own experiences, mistakes, heartache, highs, lows and all that good stuff. Neal's approach is different. He twists his stories in ways that leave you digging for answers. Neal may sing about similar situations, but may take a different route to get there. All members contribute equally, and it would be a shame to sing something lame over all that work. I think we're influenced by each other. We've got four lives in this band, so there's bound to be some good dirt to sing about.

UTV: *Assembly* isn't your first time in a recording studio. With that in mind, did you approach the recording process any differently, or do you just go into recording with the same mindset of just making the best record possible?

Ryan Mills: Greg Dawson is the man! He likes beer and wrestling. Who wouldn't want to record with a guy like this? The atmosphere is pretty funny and rarely ever tense. He's got the ear and loves loud guitars, so we might be in love. Kover wrote our way into the studio. "Asphalt and Stone" was written on the spot. I think every band goes into the studio wanting to leave with the best album of all time. Kover always has a great time in the studio because it evokes so much inspiration and emotion. To be honest, I knew Jaye was good, but he totally steals the show when we record. I'm sloppy as hell, so the guitar is stolen from me half the time during recording. It's Punk Rock anyway, right? [laughs]

UTV: Another aspect of *Assembly* is the massive amount of energy contained on one disc. Do you think the recording captures your live sound adequately or can we expect even more from you on stage?

Ryan Mills: I think Dawson did a great job capturing our sound. I can only hope we sound that good live, but with the liquor flowing who's to really tell? Chances are, we won't be throwing our bodies all over the place to distract the audience from our mediocre songs. I think you'd have to come and see for yourself. Is this an obvious enough ploy to get you to our show?

UTV: Kover is from Canada. In relation to trying to get the band known in the US, are there any specific stereotypes or problems that you run into? Can we expect a tour soon?

Ryan Mills: Kover will be there if the borders allow it. We are looking for a good booking agent right now. All four members work for a living, so it's tough to sit down and book an entire tour ourselves, at least a good one. Being in a band from Canada is alright. I do believe that Kover would be appreciated and enjoyed much more by an American or European audience. Stereotypes might be surrounding us, but I haven't heard much. It's more the consequence of comparison that I hear. The band will be there in time. There is nothing stopping us from leaving tomorrow.

UTV: There seems to be a disproportionate amount of Canadian comedians that have found success in the US. Why do you think that is?

Ryan Mills: I don't know man, I personally think that Mitch Hedberg was the funniest guy around. He was American, no?

UTV: I think that's all I have for you today, so if I missed anything, please feel free to add it in now. Thanks!

Ryan Mills: I'll use this for the plugs. San Martin Records will also be releasing *Assembly* in Italy in October. Check us out at www.Koverrock.com and www.myspace.com/Koverrock. You can get the album from here www.engineerrecordsusa.com. Alright, back to the grind before I get busted for doing this interview by my boss! Thanks a million. X

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In 2005, Leaves Eyes toured the US with Atrocity. The unusual thing about this is that they are the same band, in different configurations. Atrocity is led by vocalist Alexander Krull, and Leaves Eyes is lead by vocalist Liv Kristine. The two are married, and play in each other's bands. I sat down with them while they were here, and interviewed them together about both bands. It's taken me some time to get this to the magazine, but with the release of Leaves' Eyes new EP, **Legend Land** [Napalm], it seemed like the perfect time. Thanks to everyone who helped me put this together, as this seemed destined to be one of the hardest interviews I ever had to set up.

# Leaves' Eyes

# and

# ATROCITY

Myk

Under the Volcano: So this is your first US tour for both bands?

Alexander Krull: Atrocity played the Milwaukee Metal Fast in '99.

UTV: So it has been six years since you played the US at all?

Alexander Krull: Yes. There were some plans to make an Atrocity tour in the past, but all the times, something was going on and we couldn't go. Like Theatre of Tragedy, when Liv was in the band, tour was planned a couple of times, but never happened.

UTV: [to Liv] So this is your first time EVER playing America?

Liv Kristine: Yeah. I was there with Atrocity doing backing vocals, but as for me having a main performance, yes. This is the first time.

UTV: For both of you, how hard is it doing two sets a night, every night?

Alexander Krull: Okay. When we did our own tour, last Autumn, it was much more heavy to play, like two and a half hours. But now we play a shortened set, so it is not a problem. It is a little bit stressful to change clothes and such.

Liv Kristine: On our last European tour, last year, we played a one hour set with Leaves' Eyes and a one hour set with Atrocity after each other, that was pretty tough. We did that for 30 concerts, at least. That was pretty tough.

UTV: How many dates are you in the States for?

Alexander Krull: We are playing 10 dates, and then some got cancelled, and we had an accident with the tour bus.

UTV: Is everyone okay?!

Liv Kristine: We are, but it is just pure luck! We had a guardian angel somewhere.

Alexander Krull: On the highway. The trailer was just destroyed.

Liv Kristine: We were just asleep and we just heard *woooh* and we crashed. We were like, "Okay, we should get out," and then two other cars crashed into us. It was just pure luck.

UTV: Is that why you are using the back line? Was the equipment destroyed? Or were you doing a backline tour anyway?

Liv Kristine: Our backline? We had a backline anyway, but some of the stuff was destroyed in the accident.

UTV: If you had all your own equipment, do you guys do any kind of equipment change over between the two bands?

Alexander Krull: Not really. Just some of the microphones for the other guys.

Liv Kristine: Just the guitars and the bass.

UTV: You hit a couple of conventions, or mini festivals here. Chicago, and now a horror movie convention…

Alexander Krull: IS IT REALLY?!

UTV: In Massachusetts.

[Both]: Alright! Okay!

UTV: It is like a double theme. Two days of concerts, including your little tour and the next night is Turbonegro. Then in the next building over there is a horror movie convention.

Alexander Krull: That is very funny! Yeah, that is cool. We are kind of used to that kind of thing. Like the [Wraith 47?] Festival in Germany, it is like a big coffee and Metal festival. Yeah, like 25,000 people there. So they have a convention, like poems and fetish artists. Everything together.

UTV: Sounds like you have a lot of bigger things going on in Europe than you have here.

Alexander Krull: Maybe, I don't know.

Liv Kristine: I think there is just a bigger scene established in Europe, especially in Germany. Ah, 15 years ago it was kind of an underground thing that was going on for some years, and with the beginnings of Theatre of Tragedy and Paradise Lost, things started to change, and this kind of music and the way of dressing [became] more widely accepted. And since you've got Evanescence coming from the States and conquering Europe, it's going somehow into the mainstream, although in my opinion Evanescence has nothing to do with what we are doing--it's just female led Metal. It's not Gothic Metal, in my opinion.

UTV: Bands like Atrocity, Theatre of Tragedy, Leaves' Eyes, Lacuna Coil... these are bands that have been around for years, have several releases and maybe never got the recognition they deserved. Now, here's this Johnny come lately, Evanescence, out of nowhere. How does that feel for someone like you has been doing this for many years?

Alexander Krull: I like them. I know that many people hate them, maybe because they are successful, but I like them.

Liv Kristine: It is a good band, but it is sometimes frustrating. People just don't seem to know where this kind of music came from. So, we have to do a lot of touring and try to inform the people that there is this kind of music in this genre. There is so much more, which is really, really great. That is one of our biggest tasks, I think.

Alexander Krull: On the other hand though, Rammstein, they did it long before. Before, Monte Connor, from Roadrunner, was here. It was funny; we talked about the old days and when we had been on Roadrunner with Atrocity, and at that time they changed the German title into an English one, because they thought you cannot sell records in America with a German album title.

UTV: Things have definitely changed over the years.

Alexander Krull: Yeah! I told him our title was *Todessehnsucht* and Rammstein had the album *Sehnsucht*. Our album in English means "Longing For Death" and their's, "Longing." You see, it is just a little difference. They sold like half a million records in the States?

UTV: More...

Alexander Krull: More?! You see that! But I don't complain about it. The reality is that they were just at a better time. And they are much more mainstream, or actual commercial music. No doubt about it.

UTV: If I researched this correctly, Atrocity has had 18 releases over the years? Is that possible?

Alexander Krull: You would know more than me.

UTV: Including singles and everything?

Alexander Krull: It could be. I don't know in my mind, to be perfectly honest. I don't know it.

UTV: Essentially, Leave Eyes and Atrocity are the same band.

Alexander Krull: Same people, two different bands.

UTV: Did you join Atrocity first and end up doing your own thing, or did you do your own thing and just join Atrocity?

Liv Kristine: I met my husband nine years ago…

Alexander Krull: You sure?

Liv Kristine: Well, actually, we met almost 12 years ago.

Alexander Krull: Well, 10 years ago we were on tour together. In '94, no '95. 2005, it's 10 years...

Liv Kristine: Yes, 10 years. We became a couple a few years later. We met for the first time on a Theatre of Tragedy/Atrocity tour. After that, as we came together and I moved to Germany and joined Atrocity. So I have been in Atrocity for a long time.

Alexander Krull: It is like we are a big family. When Liv was finished with her studies, I said, "Well what are you gonna do with it now?" You learn a lot about Shakespeare and literature, you are an English master, so what are you doing? How can you use your lyrics? You cannot use them for Theatre of Tragedy anymore, because they changed their type of music, so the lyrics were not that similar style. So I said, "Come on, let's do something new." Liv was thinking about it already, and she said, "Yeah, I have some great ideas already in mind. Some concepts, lyrical stuff." So we asked the other guys. Chris, he was always the guy saying, "Come on, let's do something. We all live together." So we founded a band.

UTV: How many members of Atrocity are original?

Alexander Krull: Uh, two. Matthias [Roderer]-- the guitar player with the short hair--and me.

UTV: It has been how many years?

Alexander Krull: Don't ask me. Twenty. We formed in 1985.

UTV: That's really cool. Congratulations.

Alexander Krull: A lot of people ask me, "How have you never been to the States?" and stuff.

UTV: It's hard to come over here.

Alexander Krull: 'Til things are going on. We are busy with other things, many other tourings and stuff like that. We had plans and didn't make it. It is funny that we are finally here.

UTV: I understand that you guys are from all over the place?

Liv Kristine: Yes, I am from Norway.

UTV: [to Alex] and you are from Germany?

Alexander Krull: Yes.

UTV: The rest of the guys are all from Germany?

Alexander Krull: Yes, but the drummer is from Austria. It is like five, six hours away.

UTV: So how do you practice?

Alexander Krull: Actually, Liv is living together with me in Germany, so when the drummer joined the band and now he is working for my company. So most of the time he stays in Germany as well.

UTV: So most of the time you're all together. In different incarnations, you have played with Destruction, Grave Digger, Doro--big bands that what we consider classic bands. Is there a difference between playing with someone like that versus playing with the new bands? Is there a difference to you?

Alexander Krull: Yeah, maybe. Some bands are very experienced, like Destruction and Doro, but I see that it is cool that we can go with all of these bands. We can play with Metal bands, Death Metal bands, a Gothic band. We play in Europe with them all at festivals. There is not many bands that can do that.

Liv Kristine: Atrocity even played at the soccer game.

Alexander Krull: Yes, in front of 50,000 people.

UTV: I'm amazed that you actually said "soccer." I would expect you all to say football.

Liv Kristine: Alright.

UTV: I understand you had a song in a commercial for an American show called *Numb3rs*; how did that come about? Is that something that you intended to do, or did they find you?

Liv Kristine: Well, we had this song and I think our label, Napalm Records, was just looking for a way to get into the American market somehow. Then they got the request from, I'm not sure who, but a request for the song for *Numb3rs*.

Alexander Krull: They sent the song around to producers and they were fascinated by the song, that is why they chose it.

Liv Kristine: We were lucky in that.

UTV: Have you seen anything come from that?

Liv Kristine: Not from the American market.

UTV: Has the show now come over to Europe?

Liv Kristine: Yes it has. So people are watching *Numb3rs* and the song comes on, and people start calling. We heard that song somewhere before. Then they start to realize where they heard it.

UTV: Within the last 12 months, you guys have released a single and a full-length. In the American market, they don't really do that. What is different about the European market that you can release something and then very shortly after do another release? That seems to be very common.

Alexander Krull: It was really a mini CD.

Liv Kristine: An EP.

UTV: We don't really do singles much here anymore.

Alexander Krull: I think that the people are waiting for some new stuff, some extra songs.

Liv Kristine: It was actually an idea that we had, 'cause we wanted to say thank you to the audience for supporting the first album *Lovelorn*, which just went… the sales were fantastic.

Alexander Krull: They wanted some more stuff, was what I was trying to say.

Liv Kristine: We said, "Okay, we have too many songs for the full-length. We don't wanna leave anything out, each song has its role in the concept of the Vinland Saga." It would have been too difficult to weed something out. So, okay, let's make an EP and it is a gift and a big thank you to the audience.

UTV: Now you mentioned Vinland, which is the topic of both releases, and seems to be a fairly big topic in Gothic Metal. Type O Negative did a whole merchandise campaign. For those not aware, can you explain that whole concept a bit?

Liv Kristine: Well, Vinland is actually a name that the Vikings gave to part of Canada when they discovered American 1000 years ago, which was 500 years before Columbus.

UTV: That's okay, he didn't really discover America anyway. They say he went to the West Indies.

Liv Kristine: So, I learned about Vinland at school when I was a little girl and I was fascinated by the history of the Vikings. As I started to write the music for our second album, one thing was for sure--it was going to have a concept about the ocean, and that we wanted to go back in time. I thought, what was one thing that amazed me about school? I was always into the writing about Vikings. So, I decided let's go with *Vinland Saga*. At school in Norway, you read all the Sagas actually. We are also well-informed about the history. We know everything about the Vikings and start reading about them when we are like six years old.

Alexander Krull: It is also something I like very much. Combining historical, mystical and a kind of romantic story, and then we also discovered that there was a German out with the Vikings.

Liv Kristine: On board, on Leif Erikson's ship.

Alexander Krull: His name was Tokia.

Liv Kristine: Leif Erikson was the captain, but his favorite crew member was German and called Tokia. It is also a parallel to me because of the Norwegian/ German connection.

Alexander Krull: So, he has a wife waiting in Norway while they go out on an adventure.

Liv Kristine: That is our story. The wife part we might have invented, but it might have been that way. We just took it a step further to make a parallel to our private lifes.

Alexander Krull: Actually he is the guy where the name came from, because he was in Germany…

Liv Kristine: Well, as Tokia was coming from Germany he knew all about grapes and he came to Vinland he went in the woods to see if everything was clear--no danger for his friend, Leif Erikson--and he found grapes. He found some grapes on the ground as well, and he ate them, and he got drunk and he said "Okay, I know this kind of fruit, we have this in Germany and it is the fruit from which we make wine, so let's call it the land of wine, Vinland".

Alexander Krull: That is the story, and now you know it. Did Type O ever explain it?

UTV: Not to my knowledge.

Alexander Krull: Hey Pete Steele, listen to that!

UTV: When you write songs for Atrocity or you write songs for Leaves' Eyes, your sounds are fairly different. How do you decide as you are playing your guitar at home one day, "That's an Atrocity riff or that's a Leaves' Eyes…:?

Alexander Krull: We do it from the beginning. It is totally different.

Liv Kristine: We work on one thing at one time.

Alexander Krull: That is basically it. One time, we had two concerts so we had to concentrate on one and then one. It is never like, "This is Leaves' Eyes and this is Atrocity." It's not like that. You go and have an idea and then you do it.

UTV: I think you guys have covered it all so thank you.

[Both]: Thank you very much. X

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It's getting harder and harder for a small label to support itself, and when the label is a socially-conscious one, things can be even more complicated. Since 2000, Chicago's Organized Crime Records has released great bands and supported worthy causes. I spoke to label owner Clint Billington a few weeks before he became totally immersed in sponsoring August's Heist Fest, a volunteer-run Hardcore festival started nine years ago by Killer guitarist/promoter Shane Merrill. In addition to bands like Ramallah, 25 Ta Life and Deathcycle being scheduled to play, proceeds from this year's festival were earmarked for First Slice (www.firstslice.org), which helps feed Chicago's homeless.

Under the Volcano: You have two new releases coming up from Regret. What can you tell me about the band, and why two releases so close together?

Clint Billington: Regret is a stunning band partly from Eau Claire, Wisconsin and partly from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Guitarist Sean Lipinski [formerly of Holding On] started the band with vocalist Matthew Keil. They made their demo in 2005 and then had some lineup problems. I had been talking to them since the demo came out and was blown away by how good it was. Matt and Sean finally found guys that were on the same wavelength as them and added Brad on guitar, Isaiah on bass, and Brian on drums. They were dying to record their new stuff, so they immediately went into the studio and recorded what is now called *Misery Brigade*. It's comprised of six truly amazing songs that blow me away every time I hear them, and the fact that I'm involved in this project makes me even happier. *Misery Brigade* will be out at the end of July. Anyway, we were talking about the demo and I thought people needed to hear it, so we did a small pressing so the band had some stuff for kids to check out before *Misery Brigade* comes out.

UTV: On your website, you have several mentions of the Protect organization. Tell me about that group and why it's so important that people get involved...

Clint Billington: Protect was first explained to me the following way: you look at all the most powerful organizations that lobby the government to change laws and make laws, and they all have a single reason they're so powerful--focus. Look at the NRA for instance; they don't, as an organization, care about causes such as abortion, the environment and animals, but you try and submit any sort of gun control and they will be all over you. Their main power lies in their focus. They have X number of members, and they can persuade them to vote for this person or that person solely based of how that candidate feels about gun control. Protect is similar in that their focus is strictly on the protection of children. Their mission statement is simple: "*PROTECT is a national pro-child, anti-crime* membership association. We are founded on the belief that our first and most sacred obligation as parents, citizens, and members of the human species is the protection of children from harm." Their most recent campaign is to travel around the United States and change the laws that are commonly called "the incest exception." These laws vary from state to state, but the simplest way to explain it is if a person molests a random child that person would receive mandatory jail time if convicted. But, if that person molests a child that they are related to through blood or marriage, they are eligible automatically for probation, thus teaching predators to grow their own victims. The states have such abominable laws to curtail marriage between cousins, and it has since been used as a loophole to allow pedophiles to escape prison time. Protect's goal is to get these types of laws changed in the states that have them. It takes a lot of time and money to accomplish these changes, and that's why they need support. A great guy, Lou Bank, has created a program called Novel-Tees that's an easy way for anyone to help support Protect. We get designs from authors like Andrew Vachss, Nick Hornby, and Joe R. Lansdale that have to do with their books, and all the proceeds from the sale of these shirts are donated to Protect. Our next projects are for Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*, Andrew Vachss's *Mama's Restaurant* from his Burk novels and *Isher Sports Store* from F. Paul Wilson's *Repairman Jack* series. We will start taking orders for these designs soon. You can check out www.protect.org or www.crimescenemerch.com for more information. I encourage everyone to take a minute and check the Protect site to learn more about the truly important work that they do.

UTV: Your next release is Few and the Proud. How did they come to join the Organized Crime family, and fans of what bands should look out for them?

Clint Billington: Few and the Proud is comprised of guys from all the Straight Edge bands to come out of Chicago in the last few years, including Plan of Attack, Expired Youth, Sidewalk, and Double Crossed. They're one of the hardest bands I've ever heard, and the sincerity is no joke or fad. I have known most of the guys for several years, so when they asked me about doing a record for them, I jumped at the chance. Imagine Judge, Slapshot, and Breakdown all together and you get an idea of what Few and the Proud sounds like. Their new record *Stampede* comes out end of August.

UTV: You released a record by a band called Cross Examination. They're an '80's sounding Thrash band, much like Municipal Waste. What attracted you to them, and do you see traditional Thrash making a strong comeback?

Clint Billington: Man, I hope traditional Thrash is coming back. I grew up as a metalhead and then got into Hardcore when all the bands I loved were becoming more commercial. Can anyone tell me why Suicidal felt they needed to go Funk? Anyway, I had been talking to Step On It--from St. Louis--which shares members with Cross Exam. Step On It was taking a break, and Cross Exam had stuff they wanted to release and I loved the band, so it worked out perfectly. Deep Six Records (www.deepsixrecords.com) released a 7" version for all the vinyl fans and we did the CD. The CD has seven extra tracks, and some pretty hilarious enhanced footage. The band hasn't been able to tour because four out of five of them are on probation, but it looks like finally in August they'll be able to leave the state and hit the road. As soon as they get back, Devil Dan, the singer, has to go to jail for a month--talk about dedication! These guys are one of the most energetic and funny bands I've ever seen.

UTV: You're located in Illinois, home, in addition, to Victory Records. Do you think this fosters a home field rivalry between the two labels?

Clint Billington: I don't really think so. They have their stuff, and I have mine. I can't really see them being into what I do or vice versa. There are some other great labels in the Midwest like Lifeline Records (www.lifelinerecords.net) as well.

UTV: You started a merchandise company in addition to the label. How did that come to be?

Clint Billington: My buddy Bill Smiles and I love the band Life's Blood and we wanted shirts by them, but I hate bootleg shirts because they're just so scummy. So, we thought about contacting all these old bands that kept getting their shirts bootlegged and licensing designs from them. I started contacting bands and got a lot of interest, and then thought of all the current bands that don't have time to do their own merch fulfillment and Crime Scene Merchandise was born. Ironically, Life's Blood was one of the only bands that shot us down. All the bands get paid for every shirt they sell, and have a cheap way to get merch for their tours. It's also a way to help support Organized Crime and develop relationships with other bands, not to mention getting some really cool shirts.

UTV: It seems that several of the bands that you've released over the years have now called it quits. Do you find this makes it difficult to run a label when bands aren't out to support their own records?

Clint Billington: Sure, it makes it hard. Usually when a band breaks up, sales slow down, and as a result, the label is left with records that aren't moving. But, it's the nature of the beast; if you let things like that bug you, you'll go crazy. At the beginning of 2005, I had four bands break up and it really discouraged me, not only for the security of the label, but if I put out music by a band, it's because I like the band and I'm not going to hear any more new music from them now. Another reason I started Crime Scene Merch was because I was left with a hole in the label and needed to keep things moving. I'm very excited about the roster we now have. As well as the bands we've already talked about, bands like Left Hand Path, The Killer, Black SS, Raining Bricks and Hollow Ground really excite me.

UTV: How did you get hooked up with Kill Your Idols for a release?

Clint Billington: I've been friends with Gary [Bennett, guitar] since he was in Sheer Terror and a friend of a friend, Boston Frank, started working on releasing this Kill Your Idols 7". Due to some issues out of everyone's control, that planned release will not happen, but there are some other things we are working out with them that should be pretty cool.

UTV: With bands like A18 and Terror having releases on the label, what has been your biggest release to date?

Clint Billington: A18 was my first release and it came out before they signed to Victory. The band was between releases and needed something out there for people to check out, so they gave me a shot to release the *Defining the Color Conviction* 7". It will amaze me till the day I die that they weren't huge--I can't get enough of them. Nice guys and great band--how can you lose? The Terror/Promise/Plan of Attack split 7" was probably my fastest seller, but it was just a one time press.

Probably the best-selling one of my bands has been The Killer's *Better Judged by Twelve Than Carried by Six* record. We just did the scumbag thing and re-released it with four extra studio tracks and a live DVD. Here is the justification: I had just hired an amazing publicist, Sean Rhorer at Invisible Youth PR, and we both thought there was a lot of life left in that record but questioned how to get people to take notice and give a damn. We added the stuff and resolicited it to press and stores to give the band more of a push and a better foundation for their next record. We hope that the kids that bought it the first time around don't feel screwed.

UTV: Most of your vinyl releases have been multi-color pressings. How do you determine how many of each color to press and how limited a release will be?

Clint Billington: For a normal release there are three versions: one that's for the band to sell on the road, one for pre-order/mail order, and then the normal version you get at stores and distros. If there's a split with a couple bands, each band still gets their own color. When we repress a record it will get a new color. I'm a huge fan of vinyl and love collecting records, so I love making records. That's also why I will sell a small number of all the copies of each record on the web site so kids all over have a chance to get all and to keep the collector virus going.

UTV: On your discography page of your site, you don't list all your releases' breakdowns. Why is that?

Clint Billington: All of the albums that were released on vinyl are up there, but I haven't done the CDs since that's always changing and is not so much of a collectible. There are two new records that I need to still put up, but it's mainly for the vinyl collectors.

UTV: You have several MP3s available on your site, for most of your bands actually. How do you feel about downloading and how it has affected the Hardcore scene?

Clint Billington: That's a pretty tricky question. I think it's a great way for people to check out new bands, but I think it's very harmful for people to just burn records and not buy them. It makes it hard for the bands and labels to make ends meet if they're not selling records. The philosophy I try to follow is, if you get a copy of a record and you like it, you should then go out and buy the real deal.

UTV: What's been your biggest headache running a label?

Clint Billington: I would have to say getting records into stores. There are so many hoops you have to jump through to get a record stocked that it gets very frustrating, especially for a guy that's totally pro record store. There's nothing better that going to a record store and finding cool stuff; I find ordering online boring.

UTV: Do you accept unsolicited demos from bands?

Clint Billington: Of course. Every demo I get, I listen to. I'm always looking for more bands. I'm honored when someone takes the time to send me a record because they're a fan of what we do.

UTV: What do you look for in a band in regards to adding them to your roster?

Clint Billington: First, I have to like them. If I cannot truly enjoy listening to a band, how can I do my best for them? The band also has to want to tour--the best way for the bands and the label to grow is to have the bands tour and spread the word. The bands also need to be sincere and excited about what they're doing. You would think it's a given, but there is a ton of bands I see who look utterly bored to death; how can you expect people to want to get into them if the bands themselves are not even into it? To this point, I've put out just Hardcore bands, but that may not always be the case. As long as I believe in the band and enjoy their music, I'm game.

UTV: Last question. Who's the gangster in the mug shot you use for your logo?

Clint Billington: I really wish I had a cool story about it, but I don't. The logo was designed by Dave Quiggle (www.davequiggle.com), and he just made the face up. I was going to have at least the date on it mean something, but it doesn't. Dave also did the logo for Crime Scene. I love anything that kid touches.

Lastly, I want to thank *Under the Volcano* for taking the time and interest in helping out a small label like Organized Crime Records and our bands. You guys have been a very important part and service to the music scene for as long as I can remember. I'm honored to have stuff I'm involved with included in your pages. Thanks. X

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With the commercialization and divisiveness of modern underground music, it's good to see bands associated with straight forward Hardcore incorporating the caustic, nihilistic drive of Punk into their sound. Maine's Outbreak infuse their structured volleys with the raw vocals and frantic musicianship characteristic of a bygone period when the terms "Punk" and "Hardcore" were virtually synonymous. **Failure** [Bridge Nine], Outbreak's latest release on Bridge Nine, is a diverse affair that balances a range of influences and styles within its fast-paced assault. I recently interview vocalist Ryan O' Connor, and the results follow...

# outbreak

## mike ramek

Under the Volcano: There's a raw punk edge to the Hardcore you play. Did Outbreak form with the intention of bringing punk back into straight forward Hardcore?

Ryan O'Connor: Not really, but we've always been a band that doesn't see a fine line between Punk and Hardcore like so many other people do-at least I don't. Sometimes people say we're a Hardcore band, and some people say that we're a Punk band...I couldn't really care less which title we're given. We always just wanted to play fast. We're into stuff like Negative Approach and Bad Brains, so I think that reflects more of our sound, and not so much trying to "bring punk back into Hardcore"..

UTV: Are you happy with the latest LP, *Failure*? What are you most proud of, and what would you want to change if you could? In what ways does the LP differ from the first 7" release?

Ryan O'Connor: Overall, we're happy with it. I'd be lying if I said there weren't a few things that I wish I could go back and change, or lyrics that I wish could have been tweaked, but I think everyone who goes into the studio goes through this. But, they're mostly minuscule changes that no one would probably notice except for me [laughs] so they probably aren't worth pointing out and boring everyone! How does it differ from our first 7"? Well, for one, we had a clue on what we were doing in the studio this time [laughs]. And we knew how to write better songs, and were the tightest we've ever been musically. I think that reflects on the new record, so if you were to compare it to the first 7", it wouldn't even sound like the same band. We recorded the 7" when we were still in high school, so we didn't really know what we were doing. It didn't help that we recorded with a dude who didn't have the slightest clue about Hardcore and Punk, so it was just a mess. I can't believe that some people actually listen to and like our first 7".

UTV: Was there a central theme or vibe you were trying to convey with the new full-length? Can you elaborate on the motivations behind the suicide-themed artwork on the LP cover?

Ryan O'Connor: Not really, although I've heard some people say that it came out that way; it wasn't really on purpose though. I just read a review where it said *Failure* was a concept album...we didn't go into this record saying, "Hey, lets write a concept record!" but I guess with the artwork and some of the lyrics it can be perceived that way. For the artwork, we gave Florian a very vague idea of what we were looking for. We told him the title of the record and I forwarded him some of the lyrics, and he just went to town. In a way, I guess you could say it fits the vibe of the record, because some of the lyrics are about being hopeless, and the dude on the cover is surrounded by demons and contemplating killing himself--he looks pretty hopeless [laughs].

UTV: There is an underlying feeling of loss that pervades *Failure*. What were some of the personal experiences that prompted the sentiments expressed on your record?

Ryan O'Connor: These questions are always hard to answer. The lyrics are always scribbled down when I'm at an absolute low point. There are times when you can't help but feel depressed, or confused, or angry, and when I'm going through these emotions, I write the lyrics. If I try to write lyrics just for the sake of needing to fill in space on a song because studio time is coming up fast, the words always seem so hollow. So, I'm not gonna give you a list of personal experiences that prompted certain lyrics, but the words are straight forward enough for anyone who feels a little crazy sometimes to relate to.

UTV: One thing that really stands out about the band's sound is the over-the-top vocal work, which is gritty and unsettling...it almost has a Scandinavian Thrash vibe, or brings to mind bands like The Accused; it sounds unusually tortured and irate. What prompted the adoption of this style as contrasted with a comparatively straight forward musical scheme?

Ryan O'Connor: [laughs] Thank you. I will take the review of my vocals being "unusually tortured and

**THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL DEPRESSED, OR CONFUSED, OR ANGRY...**

irate" as one of my favorites. Nothing really prompted my vocal style; I just go into the studio and do my thing. I'm not a "professional singer"...I know how to scream my lungs out and lose my mind when I'm on a stage, that's about it.

UTV: How was the recording process approached this time around? Any differently? I understand that the band wanted to try and capture more of their live sound on the new recording...

Ryan O'Connor: We approached this recording very differently than previous times. We really wanted to make this record count, so we gave it more of an effort. We went into a cheaper studio before we did the real thing and demoed our songs. Every time we go into the studio, we leave and are like, "Fuck, I wish we could change that part!" So, we figured if we demoed all of our songs, and sat on them for a couple of weeks, it would give us a better idea of what we liked and didn't like before we went into the real studio and were on the clock. And it worked. We ended up changing up a lot of the songs and lyrics from our demo session to the actual recording. And it made us way tighter--demoing is like rehearsing for three days straight, and playing the songs 100 times each, ya know? So by the time we hit the studio to do our album, we were all on the same page. The recording was also more of a group effort. Chuck [Bruce, guitar] still wrote a majority of the songs, but Nate [Manning, drums] and Chris [Linkovich, guitar] had a lot more input than on previous records. We didn't really try to capture our live sound, but we were really pushing for our record to have the same intensity as a live show. I know that I hate seeing a band and being blown away, and then listening to their record and it just not being the same-it's hard to pull off. Most bands can do the opposite; they can make a really solid record in the studio, but then can't hold it together for a live show. I felt that we could always put on a good live show, but our records just weren't up to par--which is okay in a sense, because I'd rather be good on stage than suck live, but be able to do cool shit in the studio. But anyway, I think our new record is the closest we've come to capturing our live sound, which still might not even be close! I don't know.

UTV: Bridge Nine is one of the most prominent labels in the Hardcore scene, which almost guarantees the band a certain degree of respect, and that it'll be heard by a larger audience. But, along with the band's new visibility also comes new pressures. What are some of the adjustments you've been making as a band--and as people--since the record has been released?

Ryan O'Connor: Honestly, we're still doing the same thing we've always been doing. We're going to continue to tour and try to play out in as many places as possible. This is our biggest record yet, but we don't really need to make any adjustments, because even on our past EPs, we toured more than most bands do off a full-length. But, I'd be lying if I said we weren't going to try and step it up a bit. In a three month span we'll be touring Europe, Australia, Japan and South Korea.

UTV: What is your view of the current state of Hardcore and Punk in Maine, specifically?

Ryan O'Connor: Maine is like any place, it can be hit or miss. I say this in every interview, but it's true. I've definitely booked shows where I thought there would be at least 150 kids, and 20 kids showed up. And on the other hand, I've booked shows with all local bands and expected 50 kids, and 200 ended up paying. I will admit that all the local shows we've played over the last couple of years, have, for the most part, been a really great fucking time. A problem with Maine is that it's so spread out. Maine is bigger than the rest of New England put together, so a lot of people don't realize how far kids need to drive to get to certain shows., and it doesn't help that gas is three dollars a gallon. Hardcore kids are poor and can barely afford to pay to get into shows, let alone spending 20 bucks just to get to the venue. For Southern Maine shows, I need to drive two hours one way, so that should give you an idea of what I'm talking about. But, back to the question...

After seeing many places around the world, I'll say that Maine doesn't have it too bad. Lots of places are swarming with tough-guy shitheads who think it's cool to start fights and beat up dudes who are half their size...I am glad that Maine isn't like that. I think our scene has a lot of potential and a lot of people who really care about doing positive things with it. Hardcore can be so cliquey though, kids come and go, but I guess for every few kids who drop out, another kid gets psyched on it and starts coming out to shows.

UTV: How has living in the state of Maine influenced the band's outlook?

Ryan O'Connor: It can be good and bad. Sometimes you aren't taken seriously if you say your band is from Maine, and sometimes people will see that we've toured our asses off and be like, "Woah, I didn't know a band from Maine could do that" [laughs] so it can work both ways. Modern Life Is War is a good example of this, too. They're from Iowa, so a lot of dudes will get psyched that a band--from Iowa, of all places--is out touring their asses off and trying to make a name for themselves, even though they are from a state that--to my knowledge--is famous for corn fields. So, I guess to answer your question, it's influenced our outlook in a positive way in the sense that we've realized it doesn't matter what shitty state you're from--hard work pays off most of the time.

UTV: What have been some noteworthy bands and records you have been listening to that have not been getting nearly enough attention?

Ryan O'Connor: I was just listening to this band Hour of the Wolf. I don't hear much about them, but their EP kills. They're from Arizona, so that's probably why I hadn't heard about them until we played with them the other day. Great band. Another amazing record is *Less We Believe* by a Jersey band called Between the Wars. They've got Tim Shaw from Ensign on vocals, and their EP reminds me of Unbroken...definitely in my top three records of the year. I've been listening to lots of other stuff too, but most of it has been getting a lot of attention, like the new Bronx record, and new Rise Against. I've also been listening to the new Ambitions EP, which is probably the best record of the year. If enough kids hear this band, they are going to be the biggest band in Hardcore. They remind me of Dag Nasty. Check out their EP on September 19 on Think Fast! Records; it's called *Question*. I can't say enough good things about this release, but you'll see what I'm talking about after you hear it.

UTV: Ultimately, what do you hope to accomplish with the band?

Ryan O'Connor: It's a cliched response, but we've already accomplished everything I had hoped for, and then some. When we were first jamming in Ira's garage, if you were to tell me that we would be touring Europe and Australia, and putting out multiple records for all kinds of cool record labels, selling thousands of records, getting all the emails and kind words from kids, and touring with bands like Bane and Agnostic Front, I would tell you that you are full of shit-seriously. We were in high school when we started Outbreak, and just wanted to play local shows and have our friends sing along and go crazy--that's the best feeling in the world, and to be able to accomplish that and all of the rest of the crazy shit is just an added bonus. X

**WWW.BRIDGE9.COM**

# the WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

Dan McClernon

*The World/Inferno Friendship Society is more than just a band. Yes, they write some excellent music, but they are, in fact, nine equally-talented, like-minded people that believe that change can come through the power of song, and that Punk Rock need not go by the traditional standards of guitar, bass, drums, and screaming. Hell, you'll find the Society has instruments as eclectic as horns and piano, yet they play these instruments with such reckless abandon and energy that they could be the most Punk Rock band going these days. With a new record, titled Red-Eyed Soul, [Chunksaah], just released for the masses, it seems the right time for this long-running Punk Rock orchestra to finally make an impact on a grand level. With songs such as "The Mayor of Bridgewater," and "Only Anarchists Are Pretty," now added to their larger than life catalog, I have no doubt that fame-or infamy-awaits the band. Frontman Jack Terricloth answered my questions.*

Under the Volcano: To get things started, can you introduce the people that make up World/Inferno Friendship Society and what each plays?

Jack Terricloth: Who are these people? Lucky Strano on the six string; Ms. Sandra Malak on the five, though I have no idea what she does with the fifth one; Franz Nicolay on the 88s, plus 25 on one side and 72, I believe, on the other of his accordion; Ms. Semra Ercin on two timbales, a cymbal and two and a half octaves of orchestra bells--they started out at 30 keys, but I don't think they are all there anymore. Mr. Ben Kotch on the four-piece contraption drums, plus a quiet strength which embiggens us all. Mr. Peter Hess on the B sax; Ms. Maura Corrigan tooting in the key of E; Mr. Ken Thompson also in E, but with a horn of a much larger size. My name is Jack; I mostly do interviews... or something like them.

UTV: The band is quite an enterprising task, in comparison to so many other bands out today. Was a "Punk Rock Orchestra" act something you've always been intrigued in starting? How did the idea come to you and what obstacles, if any, did you initially face when trying to assemble the band?

Jack Terricloth: It was a fucking gift, seemed inevitable, natural, so the years flew by like days in a drunken haze. It formed like a loud party joined by curious neighbors, and if there were any obstacles we ignored them until they were gone. All you need, it turns out, is one good idea and the details take care of themselves. Sow the wind.

UTV: On the World/Inferno website, there's an interesting story on the band's history, broken down into several chapters. It's pretty off the hook. What inspired it and how much truth lays within its pages?

Jack Terricloth: More of it's true than you'd be comfortable with, I'm afraid. If you just get past one metaphor the rest falls into place--I won't tell you which one, of course. Learning is figuring things out for yourself. Repetition and memorization works as well I guess, but you don't get much out of it and it's dull as all hell and I'm not here to bore you.

UTV: The band has been around for nearly 10 years, difficult enough for a three-piece to accomplish, let alone a full-fledged orchestra. How many original members exist, and how difficult do you find maintaining the Society due to member departures?

Jack Terricloth: Nobody ever really gets away; we're not the kind of reputation you can quit. Lucky, Ben, Semra and myself have been kicking it from the get go, and that is more than most four-piece bands can say after a decade. The rest of the gang have been hanging out for at least six years mostly, and it seems like a shame there was ever a record without them. I know this is probably bad for my reputation, but really, if this were unpleasant we'd stop. We knew what we were in for when we signed on; it's fine. Having a mission gives life purpose, releases free radicals into the skin which encourage health and a clear complexion, plus the opportunity to say

It was a fucking gift, seemed inevitable, natural, so the years flew by like days in a drunken haze. It formed like a loud party joined by curious neighbors, and if there were any obstacles we ignored them until they were gone. All you need, it turns out, is one good idea and the details take care of themselves. Sow the wind.

"fuck you" to the ruling hegemony with cheers in response is priceless. No, it hasn't been hard. It's a moral imperative, a duty, and an honor. Cool as shit.

UTV: In relation to the previous question, has there ever been a time when you've thought about disbanding World/Inferno Friendship Society? I mean, it has to be tiring at times to try and assemble so many people together for songwriting purposes, practice or even shows.

Jack Terricloth: Did you read that the universe's expansion seems to be speeding up? This goes against the laws of gravity, and what you would call "common sense." We're a part of that.

UTV: So you now go by the name of Jack Terricloth, though that hasn't always been the name. What's with the pseudonym? What are you hiding, huh? Jack Terricloth: I'm hiding an awful lot. I'd like to tell you but I can't. I try not to think about it, and you might talk in your sleep.

UTV: In days prior to the World/Inferno Friendship Society, you played in one of the more influential Punk bands to ever come out of New Jersey. What was that experience like? And without giving up your real identity, would you mind divulging what that band was to our readers?

Jack Terricloth: Oh, that's not one of the things I'm hiding. I was in New Brunswick, New Jersey's punk band Sticks and Stones. I don't know how influential we were but we gave as good as we got. I can think of no better way to have spent my adolescence.

UTV: On a similar line of thought, do you think you take a different approach to songwriting now in World/Inferno than maybe you did in previous songwriting endeavors? If so, can you explain?

Jack Terricloth: Sticks and Stones was always very, very forward-thinking, and Inferno is an extension of that approach. Punk Rock was promised to me as the future--new ideas, more possibilities--not comforting three chord Rock that reminds you of good times when you were free. The time is now; the time is always now. Step forward and live.

UTV: Surprisingly, it seems that the band's sound appeals to a large array of people. When you first set out, were you at all surprised by the mass appeal that the band was greeted with out of the gate?

Jack Terricloth: No, we're very charming. People don't really care about what kind of music they're listening to; only musicians do, and they should be happy we're able to draw people out of their TV dens to places where live music takes place. We're good for the economy.

UTV: Describe to me a usual World/Inferno show? What is the crowd like? What kind of theatrics can be expected from the band itself?

Jack Terricloth: There will be fighting, there will be kissing, there will be drinking, there will be dancing and then there will be the audience, who is encouraged to participate.

UTV: Okay, the band proclaims that they perform red-eyed soul show tunes, which is also the name of your new album--*Red-Eyed Soul*. So, explain to me what Red-Eyed Soul is all about?

Jack Terricloth: You know what Soul is, and you can see the look in our eyes you lazy journalist, work it out. Oh, all right: music for young and grown up deviants feeling down on their luck, Folk songs for future miscreants and Punk Rock academy fight songs. Sing along until you're hoarse, cry until you knock over your drink and are thrown out of the bar--Red-Eyed Soul.

UTV: Is it true that only anarchists are pretty? Because I have to tell you, I might have to disagree with ya there.

Jack Terricloth: I have occasionally found communists or monarchists attractive, but in the end they always have compromises in their souls which are so goddamn ugly--systems, dogmas, prejudices. Anarchists don't, so only anarchists are pretty.

UTV: So, why a song about Paul Robeson, known famously for his rendition of "Old Man River"?

Jack Terricloth: Paul Robeson was a man faced with obstacles you and I can hardly imagine, and yet gave every bit of clout and success he garnered to help his people. He was born the son of a former slave in, not coincidentally, Princeton New Jersey. He broke the color barrier in football by gaining a scholarship to--not coincidently--Rutgers University, and then earned a law degree at Columbia. He practiced law in New York City until a stenographer refused to take dictation from him in court 'cause he was a black man. He turned, as so many of us do, to the stage and was a great success for many years in, as you mentioned, *Porgy and Bess*, and the role Eugene O'Neil wrote for him, *Emperor Jones*, plus a starring turn in *Othello*. He was a radical and fell from grace after remarking that he didn't see why Black Americans would fight in a war for a country that institutionalized racism then got caught up in the Housing Committee on Un-American Activities bonfires. Jackie Robinson testified against him which must have hurt. He expatriated, but never gave up the struggle. He came from nothing, made everything, then still put everything he had on the line for what he believed in and got dropped like a hot rock for it. There should be a hundred songs about him.

UTV: So with a new album now readily available, what's in store in the near future for the band? Will you be taking this show on the road?

Jack Terricloth: Just got back from a national tour, have a month to prepare a musical we're doing on the career of Peter Lorre for the Spiegletent down at the Fulton Fish Market in September, then we're back on the road with The Bouncing Souls in October and December in the States, interspersed with a headlining tour of Europe in November. This show is on the road, trust me.

UTV: I want to thank you for your time here, and hope to see you guys soon. Thanks again!

Jack Terricloth: You're welcome. Glad you're still doing the do. Long Island and New Jersey punks forever. X

**WWW.WORLDINFERNO.COM**

# Audio Reviews

**46 Short** "Truth Denied" (*TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646*). After all the buzz about this band, I was expecting to completely hate this CD. Lucky for me, I was wrong, being pleasantly surprised by a heavy dose of blistering SoCal Hardcore Punk that reminds me as much of 1982 as it does more modern sounds like Germany's Burial. I could do without the political element, and after track number three, all the songs sound the same, but, hey, not everyone can be the Brutal Knights. Or maybe I'm not drunk enough yet. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**About** "Bongo" (*Cock Rock Disco, c/o Jason Forrest, 59 Kastanienallee, 10119, Berlin, Germany*). I've listened to almost half of this album and I still can't figure out how to describe it, but I'll try my best. About is a one-man-band from Amsterdam comprised of Rutger Hoedemaekers. Rutger doesn't so much compose songs; rather, he constructs them Negativland-style out of a mish-mash of break beats, Sgt-Pepper-on-a-bad-trip insanity and Pop hooks that are more like figure eights. Think digital Beck without the hipster hoopla, or Alec Empire as a happy hippy. You're almost there. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**The Acrobrats** "...Go Down Swinging" *(The Acrobrats, www.theacrobrats.com).* Hailing from Boston, The Acrobrats attack Power Pop with a degree of loud rockin' anger rarely heard in the melodic Punk Rock of today. For some reason I keep thinking of early Replacements—maybe very early Soul Asylum (?)—but I'm probably way off, so don't listen to me. Instead, check 'em out for yourself. They sound like they'd be great live. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Across Five Aprils** "Collapse" *(Indianola, 3072 Sheridan Rd, Valdosta, GA 31606).* Across Five Aprils is making my head spin while I'm trying to come up with a description for them. At moments, I can firmly say they sound like Taking Back Sunday, but then all of the suddenly they sound like Hawthorne Heights, and by the time I was done typing that it's Atreyu. The band melds all kinds of influences, style and song structures, and then writes songs like Dillinger Escape Plan with weird time changes, multi-layered vocals, clean guitar parts, massive bass breakdowns and gang choruses. If nothing else, the band keeps you thinking every step of the way. You have to like the heavy stuff to like these guys and there's a good amount of it, but if you like the clean parts that Bleeding Through provides in their heavy, then Across Five Aprils could be a great band for you. (CD)-**Myk**

**All That Remains** "The Fall of Ideals" *(Prosthetic /Razor & Tie,11664 National Blvd. #413, Los Angeles, CA 90064).* There are two sides to this disc. First the positive: the songs are well written, Phil Labonte's voice is a real force, and the instrumentation is above and beyond that of most other bands in Metal. Their last album should have made All That Remains a little more on par with Killswitch Engage and Shadows Fall, and this disc might help propel them upward, as the songs have some more clean vocals that make the band more accessible. The negative: their tweaked songwriting can come across as the band trying to play catch-up to their contemporaries, and the album may be dismissed as uncreative. Therefore, I put this CD right smack in the middle of it all—I enjoy it, as the songs are well-written and catchy and very well played, but while I'm enjoying it, I know that despite its bright spots, it's a bit derivative. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Aloke** "One Day We Will Kill You" (*Pretty Activity, 177 W. 26th St. #600 New York, NY 10001).* I can't begin to properly describe this album. To sum it up in one word I'd say that among my choices are shit, trash or pointless. Yep, those were the first to come to mind. Aloke is incredibly gritty and bring with them a whole lot of distortion with dreary and often incomprehensible lyrics. If you can tell me the words that this fuckin' guy is singing, I've got a five-dollar bill with your name on it. Think Radiohead with slightly more attitude, but far worse. (CD)-**Manic**

**An Albatross** "Blessphemy (of the Peace-Beast Feastgiver and the Bear-Warp Kumite)" *(Ace Fu, POB 552, New York, NY 10009).* First off, I hate this band for making me type out that extremely pretentious title. As far as the music goes, I've been a fan of An Albatross' previous work but for whatever reason, this just isn't grabbing me at the moment. *Blessphemy...* is organ-driven, technically insane Hardcore akin to Converge, minus any semblance of structure, which I think is where the band loses me here. While I'm a huge fan of bands such as Converge, The Locust and Dillinger Escape Plan, An Albatross, with screechy female vocals that border on unbearable at times, just don't have the hooks that the aforementioned bands possess. While I know the term "hooks" when applied to these bands may sound comical and I wish I could think of a better word for it, An Albatross just seems to wander too often, and the music, while at times stellar, gets lost in the mix. (CD)-**McClernon**

**Angel City Outcasts** "Deadrose Junction" *(Sailor's Grave, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612).* Angel City Outcasts pretty standard Street/Rock that's a step under the Ducky Boys and two steps below the Dropkick Murphys. I bet they're a great time to witness live and would make a terrific opening act for the above mentioned bands, but overall, *Deadrose Junction* leaves me wanting more. (CD)-**McClernon**

**The Autumn Offering** "Embrace the Gutter" *(Victory, 346 North Justine, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607).* You know, I've been pretty damn pleased with the new wave of Metal that's been assaulting my ears lately. Bands like killwhitneydead and Recourse (see review) are the perfect alcohol to wash that Nu-Metal taste out of my mouth. I mean, did anybody actually consider Korn to be a Metal band? Anyway, who cares, right? I've got bands like The Autumn Offering to rock out to. Well-thought-out song-structures keep the music interesting, but never get in the way of the main purpose—namely: to fucking ROCK!!! Early Slayer and early Megadeath come to mind, but there's also a lot of Iron Maiden-esque guitar insanity and later Pantera go-for-the-throat heaviness. And you're still listening to Emo because...? (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**BA Baracus** *(Sonic Swirl, POB 111202 Cleveland, OH 44111).* These guys have spirit and a keen sense of appreciation for the melodic and energetic music that existed way back when. They readily deliver their own brand of traditional and old-fashioned Rock n' Roll and they are successful in bringing a more modern twist to their musical efforts, which accounts for their versatile and excellent track list. Songs like "Pin Cushion" and "Barfly Love Song" capture the essence of Hard Rock energy, which more than likely shows in the band's live performances. This is the first BA Baracus full-length release and it's a strong one—I look forward to future albums. (CD)-**Manic**

**The Bad Rackets** "Full On Blown Apart" *(Mortville, POB 4263, Austin, TX 78765).* I'm sitting here listening to a CD chock full of Buzzcocks-style Pop hooks (not the annoying ones, mind you), guitar-work reminiscent of Johnny Thunders and Cheetah Chrome, a garage sound that screams "Fuck you!!!" in your face as you're trying to get another beer, and I'm wondering, what the hell happened to Punk Rock? It used to produce bands like this, but now it's full of whining shitheads who constantly complain about their girlfriends or politics to the same beat and the same three-chord guitar maneuvers. Crap, I say! Bring me bands like the Bad Rackets, who celebrate pornography with songs like "Porno Magazines" and "Traci" (yes, about Miss Lords); and bands that enjoy fingering vaginal crevices ("Candy Dish"); and bands that rock out with balls to the tune of "Eye On You" and "High School Love." That's the street I'm on, motherfucker! (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Bang! Bang!** "Decked Out" *(Morphius, POB 13474 Baltimore, MD 21203).* Bang! Bang! is extremely unique in the truest sense. Combining both male and female fronted vocals the band's sound is reminiscent of the B-52's (minus the quirky cheesiness), combined with a distinct '70's Punk edge. In light of that comparison, *Decked Out* contains 12 incredible ditties to tap your toes to. I never got bored of this release, nor did I find any filler throughout the course of listening to it. Each song has its own personality, and that's nothing less than inspiring. (CD)**-Manic**

**The Bank Robbers** "Tomorrow Belongs to Me" *(No Milk, POB 1229, Jackson, NJ 08527).* Wow! The girl on the cover of this CD is really pretty! She's blonde, slightly tanned, sitting on a train platform with her eyes half-closed, maybe because it's early morning and the sun's in her eyes, yet she deals with it because the train is coming from that direction. She's just sitting there, waiting to get the fuck outta Dodge, her green suitcase packed with all her essentials—and when she gets to where she's going, she'll know she's there. Sigh... Oh, the band's music? It's generic Emo crap. You know—Taking Back Sunday, Hawthorne Heights, etc. I'd rather look at the girl. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

**Behemoth** "And the Forests Dream Eternally" *(Metal Mind/Music Video Distributors, POB 280, Oaks, PA 19456).* This is a domestic re-issue of this extremely hard to come by debut release from Behemoth, and came out just in time to support their summer tour. Also included on the CD as bonus tracks are the tracks from the band's *Bewitching the Pomerania* MCD. This release is like nothing we've been exposed to stateside by this Polish band. This is blazing old style Scandinavian Black Metal, including a photo of the band sporting corpse paint and a cover of a Bathory track. Even the thanks list on this is pure Black Metal with them thanking borderline bands like Graveland, Funeral Winds and Black Funeral in addition to bands like Hades and Gorgoroth. These tracks are vicious for sure. They don't have the technical prowess of the late releases, but there is no denying the pure anger and evil that is poured into these tracks. (CD)**-Myk**

**Between the Buried and Me** "The Anatomy of..." *(Victory, 346 N Justine St. Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607)* This disc of covers by these Math Metal maniacs is surprisingly tranquil, sometimes interesting, and other times induces douche-chills. The first track is the worst cover, and the best song of all selected—"Blackened," by Metallica. While the music itself sounds cool with some great drumming, the Death vocals kill the vibe that the original has. Of all the songs here, I wanted this one to remain most true to Metallica's version. The rest of the disc has the band performing renditions very close to the originals. I thought there would be some interesting reinterpretations, but instead they approach a majority of the songs as if they were a cover band at a bar. The song selection is eclectic (and yeah, I get it, that's the point) but if they were out to show some of their diverse musical interests, they could have just pointed fans in the direction of the originals, as most versions here offer few new musical adventures. For a band that prides themselves on being all over the map, these covers are easily found on Mediocre Island. (CD)**-KevTV**

**Bird Names** "Fantic Yard" *(myspace.com/birdnames). Fantic Yard* is an insipid avant-garde mess, a sickeningly moronic musical mantra, the absolute worst hippy-freak experiment in frivolously bland sound that's ever farted its way into the consciousness of man. Bird Names bleat, screech, grunt, chant, wail, and tweet over an annoying, out-of-tune array of incredibly meaningless instrumentation. The entire stomach-churning affair is 18 "songs" in length, but I barely made it past the third track before angrily ejecting it from the CD cartridge, flinging it onto the front lawn, and running it down several times with an industrial mower. Nauseating, mediocre, atrocious, torturous, and absolutely fuckin' horrendous! My ears deserve so much better than this! (CD)**-Moser**

**Bouncing Souls** "The Gold Record" *(Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026).* I sort of lost interest in the Bouncing Souls over the last few releases. Not that I didn't like them, I always have, but the release of a new album wasn't much of an event for me. I liked the albums, but I wasn't compelled, and at times the goofy parts more annoyed me than entertained. Now with the release of *The Gold Record* I think that's changed. The album is a bit darker and more focused. The music is a little less happy bouncy, and more focused Rock with a Punk twinge that's really appealing. The lyrics are really well-crafted, and at times the band even seems to have an Avail-like flair to them. Now, I fully understand that I'm never going to change anyone's opinion about the band, good or bad; I can only appeal to the people like myself that sort of lost interest. This is the Souls' return to being the band they always could be. Forget *Anchor's Aweigh*, this is the band that bordered that Hardcore/Punk Rock line that allowed them so many fans. (CD)**-Myk**

**Boys Like Girls** *(www.boyslikegirls.com).* Yes, it's true, boys **do** like girls, however judging by this record, I have my doubts as to whether **these** boys do. Boring Emo-influenced melodic Rock that pre-pubescent boys and girls—and fans of Taking Back Sunday and Hawthorne Heights—will no doubt eat up. As for me, it's one big yawnfest. (CD)**-McClernon**

**Bristle** "1984450" *(Rodent Popsicle, POB 1143, Allston, MA 02134).* One of the best releases from Rodent Popsicle in quite some time. Bristle is less thrashy than most things put out by Rodent Popsicle, which is probably why I dig this so much. Hailing from Seattle, Bristle has been kickin' around for a number of years, but it seemed they had vanished into virtual obscurity in recent times. Luckily for us, they're back with their latest album which is excellent, politically-driven Street/Punk Hardcore in the vein of The Boils and Violent Society. If you're a fan of most Rodent Popsicle, Punk Core and SOS acts, than this should be right up your alley. (CD)**-McClernon**

**Broken Bottles** "Suburban Dream" b/w "Broken Bottles" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* Broken Bottles raucously revisit the Orange County Punk Rock sound of 1981 with these two spirited, slamming tunes. Social Distortion and Adolescents are obvious influences, but this ain't no half-hearted, mediocre tribute to the glory days of Punk, kiddies. "Suburban Dream" and its flipside "Broken Bottles" are a double-fisted, action-packed blast of snot, swagger, and boozy belligerence, a blaring clarion call to cause as much disruption and destruction as possible in the uniformly manicured streets of suburban America and to have fun at it in the process. Lively, compelling, and endearingly bratty! (7")**-Moser**

**Broken Bottles** "Suburban Dream" b/w "Broken Bottles" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* This two-song single reminds me a lot of *Mommy's Little Monster*-era Social Distortion, and that's in no way a bad thing. The vocals come across with plenty of snot, crossing Mike Ness with Ben Weasel, and the band shreds it up. Sadly, there are only two songs here, but I'd really like to hear more from these cats in the future. (7")**-McClernon**

**The Bullys** "BQE Overdrive" *(www.thebullys.com).* Chalk up another mark on the board as the Bullys have returned once again with their third full-length release to date. *BQE Overdrive* this album contains many of your live favorites like "Broke," "Pop (Is For Fags)" and "'78 Nova." There's nothing like seeing these guys live, and I'll be so bold as to say that they've been able to capture that same rough and reckless live sound on record yet again; their in-your-face, don't-give-a–shit attitude is only surpassed by their Rock n' Roll prowess. Bottom line is this: if you live in New York and you've never heard of these guys, that automatically makes you an asshole. (CD)**-Manic**

**The Burning Paris** "Half Truths and Indiscretions" *(Magic Bullet, 17 Argyle Hills Dr., Fredricksburg, VA 22405).* The Burning Paris offer melodic Post-Rock instrumentals with subdued interweaving harmonics and some dissonant passages as well. At intervals, this effort's hypnotic and abstruse arrangements are enjoyable, but the lack of variety in tempo and melody ensures that these pieces begin to feel same-y as the record progresses. This is not bad in small doses, though. (CD)-**Ramek**

**Bury Your Dead** "Beauty and the Breakdown" *(Victory, 346 North Justine, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607).* Boston always has its own sound. When you had bands like Eye For An Eye and Slapshot, you knew it was Boston. Bosstones and Dropkick Murphys, oh yeah, it's Boston. Killswitch Engage and Bury Your Dead is the new Boston. Bury Your Dead has vocals that are similar to Jamey Hatebreed, but in reality are much heavier and throaty. Musically, the guitars have that brutal Metal sound that launched bands like Shadow's Fall and All That Remains. The songs are as blatantly Metal as those bands, but they are equally as heavy. The songs are Hardcore, with no apologies. They have the choruses and the breakdowns, and there are no solos to be found. This is the "Boston Beatdown" sound. If you're into bands like Blood For Blood and Shattered Realm, Bury Your Dead is another cultural icon to add to your CD collection. (CD)-**Myk**

**Cactus** "V" *(Escapi, www.escapimusic.com).* It only makes senses that in a climate where The Hellacopters, Backyard Babies and Turbonegro are doing a Rock n' Roll style and really praising the '70s, that a band like Cactus would reunite. The band existed from 1970-1972 and featured the likes of Carmine Appice on drums. *V* features three of the band's original members; only Rusty Day, who died in 1982, is not on the album. Day is replaced by former Savoy Brown frontman Jimmy Kunes, who does an admirable job. The problem is, music that was at one point pioneering becomes old hat after 30 years. The record is a decent taste of '70's Rock and Blues, but there's no kick ass lead song. The tracks are long and slow-grooved, and are all set up to be background bar music right off the back. The riffs don't rip, and Cactus sounds like a bunch of old guys back together after many years; the songs are well-played and they might work as cruising songs, but nothing on here is all that memorable. After the original Cactus releases that attained legendary status and careers that included Vanilla Fudge, you expect more from these musicians than what they have attained. I've been far more impressed by current bands playing an old sound than this old band playing new stuff—I'll take The Sword any day. (CD)-**Myk**

**Cameran** *(Innocent Words, POB 874, Danville, IL 61834).* This band reminds me of the experimental structures that got At the Drive-In some national attention, complete with the non-traditional vocal patterns, which sound like the urgent yelping of By the Grace of God. These guys definitely fall into the Post-Hardcore category due to their angular approach to songwriting. "Headphone Music Op 001" is a very well-executed instrumental with an instrument credited as a Wyzkelharpa, which sounds akin to a violin. Overall, the album contains nine tracks that take chances instead of the band playing from a template. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Capital** "Signal Corps" *(Iron Pier, POB 279, East Setauket, NY 11733).* Capital is an outfit worthy of Tom Corrigan's insightful lyricism. Silent Majority could get a little too Emo and Blood Red left something to be desired, but on *Signal Corps*, Capital's debut EP, fast-paced melodic Hardcore is the name of the game. Many of the coveted Silent Majority flourishes (intricate, layered melodies, excellent tempo shifts) are present on this effort, but Capital's overall tone is unembellished and far more energetic, equal parts driving vitriol and contagious clamor. From the ode to deflated dreams that is the opening "Transunion" to the scathing meditation on violence and conformity that is the closer "Wolverines," the musings and arrangements on this effort are top-notch. Recommended. (CD)-**Ramek**

**Capital** "Signal Corps" *(Iron Pier, POB 279, East Setauket, NY 11733).* This is a much anticipated release here on Long Island—how could it not be when the band features ex-members of Thieves and Assassins and Silent Majority? Musically, Capital picks up a heavy DC sounds that sort of crosses with mid '90's era Jersey stuff. There's a little Lifetime in there, what sounds a little like Brother's Keeper (musically, not vocally), some Dag Nasty, and of course, there are elements of the members' prior bands as well. Tommy Corrigan's vocals remain strong after years of belting out songs, and he continues to infuse feeling into the tone that has been lost in Hardcore with the rise of Metalcore. Musically, this will take you back to an era where one might be at a show with Lifetime, Avail, Flagman and Ashes on the same bill, and kids wore backpacks and all stood on stage at once. The music has an older feel to it, but it definitely isn't old. An excellent debut, and one that could appeal to the kids of today while still appealing to us jaded old fucks as well. (CD)-**Myk**

**Cattle Decapitation** "Karma.Bloody.Karma" *(Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St. #302, Simi Valley, CA 93065).* Shit. I wondered what these guys would do as an encore to their last album. What they did was get Billy Anderson to produce and started writing more diverse songs, which have the band's trademark Grind, but also elements of Slayer and traditional thrash. Travis's vocals are as out of this world as ever, with not one bit of deterioration after all that touring. The band, now a permanent four-piece, doesn't have a deficiency to speak of. They're fast, they're heavy and now they're diverse. This is like having Agoraphobic Nosebleed write and record a song in collaboration with Demicrious. Cattle Decapitation totally lays waste with *Karma.Bloody.Karma.* (CD)-**Myk**

**Celtic Frost** *(Century Media, 2323 W El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA, 90250 ).* This is the first of two discs this issue that are mutilated by over-reaching record labels' copy-protecting promos. This disc is unlistenable—a blare like the Emergency Broadcast System comes up every other minute, so the promo encouraged me to ask around for someone else's opinion. I asked Damien, an employee of my favorite bar (Croxley Ale House, they deserve a damn plug), what he thought of the album. "That shit fuckin' sucks, man. It's their worst album. I sold it a week after I bought it." And there you have it. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Chrome Division** "Doomsday Rock N' Roll" *(Nuclear Blast, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* Ever wonder what Shagrath does when he isn't doing Dimmu Borgir? Apparently he listens to a lot of Motorhead, Hellacopters and Turbonegro. Add to Shagrath members of Ashes to Ashes, Minas Tirith and The Carburetors, and you get Chrome Division, a dirty Rock n' Roll band that's only slightly less heavy than The Crown and their Death Rock sound. This has a vibe like an early Hellacopters recording from before Nikki left Entombed—it has that Metal feel, so their curious fans won't get turned off, but it's strictly filthy bar music. This is Rock n' Roll Norway style, which seems to be a growing sound over there. If you liked *Scum*, you should definitely check this out. (CD)-**Myk**

**Ciril** "Pink Cave" b/w "Metal Postcard" *(Vinyl Dog, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* With their abrasively grating metallic guitars and turbulent tribal factory rhythms, Ciril somewhat remind me of PIL with a quivering, shivering bloodthirsty hint of Christian Death on the side. The vocals, though, scream and gnash and snarl and bite like a rabidly insane creature from the darkest side of man's most nightmarish impulses. "Pink Cave" and an outrageously provocative cover of Siouxsie and The Banshees "Metal Postcard" make for one hell of an intriguing, exciting, and infectiously frightening release. (7")-**Moser**

**Ciril** "Pink Cave" *(Vinyl Dog, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* This single caught me by surprise. Ciril is a very quirky band that takes its influences from Siouxsie and the Banshees, Rudimentary Peni, Crass, and various other peace Punk bands, with guitars that at times remind me of the experimentation of Sonic Youth. Ciril is a very difficult band to figure out, and in a day and age when it's so easy to classify things into genres and pigeonhole acts as Hardcore or Emo or Pop/Punk, it's refreshing to hear something new and exciting. (7")-**McClernon**

**Clit 45** "2, 4, 6, 8...We're the Kids You Love to Hate" *(BYO, POB 67607, Los Angeles, CA 90067)*. For some reason, I really liked the last Clit 45 CD I got to review. Maybe it was the dumb SoCal Punk Rock-ness that appealed to me so much. Come to think of it, I think that's exactly what it was. This CD is a collection of early 7"s and an EP—essential for any fan who missed the releases the first time around. Every song is a rough, raw, dumb Punk Rock masterpiece, and I think I like it even better than the last one I reviewed! It's a great CD for any fans of 1980s SoCal Punk. They'd be a lot cooler without the porcupines-in-leather look, though. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

**Cult of Luna** "Somewhere Along the Highway" (*Earache, 43 West 38th St., 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10018)*. It's official— copy protection has gone too far. I understand the idea behind splitting promo discs into 99 tracks, and it doesn't interrupt the listening experience. Now we got a new entry into the mix— a voice saying, "You are listening to the new recording by Cult of Luna, out now on Earache Records." Am I? I **was** listening to the record until your voice popped in, ruining the mood of Cult of Luna's atmospheric and unique Metal. How does a label expect me or any reviewer to provide a just and fair review if the music is consistently interrupted? Imagine watching a movie with biting dialogue and some fucking cartoon character pops up every 30 seconds.

I hope I'm not coming across complaining about free tunes because I'm certainly not, but the copy protecting voice over the music is shit and ruins the whole thing. This disc sounds good and all that, but I can't get into the album the way I should because some Limey douche wrecks it every other minute—all the tracks flow into each other and should create a continuous musical experience. If you liked Cult of Luna's last album of Metal soundscapes, you'll probably like this. (CD)**-KevTV**

**Danko Jones** "Sleep Is the Enemy" *(Razor & Tie, 214 Sullivan St., New York, NY 10012)*. I seem to be liking bands out of Canada lately (girls, too, but I'll leave my MySpace fantasies out of this review). Basically, Danko Jones, and his band based out of Toronto-eh, is the punk rocker living in *Wayne's World*. Hell yeah, every song bears the powerhouse blast of the best Arena Rock-driven Scandinavian bands and that's probably why I've never heard of him until now. Next time I have a Rock n' Roll chick in my crappy garage apartment, I'm gonna put this CD on, crack open some beer, and when the song, "First Date" ("Do you kiss on the first date? 'Cause I do!") comes on, there's gonna be some hot n' heavy macking going on (if not, she can get the fuck out). Yeah, Danko Jones is my kind of Rock n' Roll. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

**Defcon 4** "File Under Fuck" *(Black Box, POB 110-454 Williamsburg Station Brooklyn, NY 11211)*. Are you still pissed that Greg Ginn did that half-assed Black Flag "reunion" a bit back? I was until I heard the latest from Defcon 4. With breakneck guitar riffs, a pummeling rhythm section and tortured vocal howls that are very reminiscent of a young Henry Rollins, *File Under Fuck* combines the raw punk rock clamor of Black Flag with the technical proficiency of Born Against to remind us that Punk and Hardcore still have a pulse. This reminds me of all the great records that made SST an underground staple. (CD)**-Andriani**

**Deflowered** "Pollen-Nation" *(www.myspace.com/defloweredmusic)*. Hailing from Albany, New York are a trio of degenerates who take great pride in producing highly infectious and absolutely gritty Punk Rock with just a hint of Thrash thrown in for good measure. Their *Pollen-Nation* EP proves to be a strong release and provides the listener with a rough taste of what the band can amply crank out. "Little Boxes" and "Rise" bring with them a sense of reckless abandon, while the anthemic "Sittin' On the Corner" is sure to keep all of the drunk cats happy. The only thing I would've liked to hear was a stronger production and a better mix. (CD)**-Manic**

**Demented Are Go** "Hellbilly Storm" *(Hep Cat, POB 1108, Orange, CA 92856)*. It's a full moon, the clouds are looming low, lightning sporadically flashes across the midnight sky, and the hounds of death ominously howl in the distance as a *Hellbilly Storm* brews on the horizon. Psychobilly stalwarts Demented Are Go are once again on the loose, and the devil's dancing a jig with his daughter in the deepest pits of Hades to celebrate such a psychotically enchanting occasion. It's an evil, delightfully unsavory maelstrom of tombstone-rattling rhythms that's sure to scare the shit out of respectable, law-abiding citizens everywhere while thoroughly stirring sentiments of sin, sleaze, and debauchery within the lost souls and wilted hearts of undesirable, rotten miscreants like you and me. *Hellbilly Storm* is the end-all, be-all tongue-wagging, pelvis-thrusting, spine-snapping Psychobilly freak-out, and not even Jesus Christ himself can save you from this sordid affair. (CD)**-Moser**

**The Destroyed** "Russian Roulette" *(The Destroyed, www.thedestroyed.com)*. Adding to my collection of oddball, outsider music is this new CD from The Destroyed. This is the type of music that, if I put it on while hanging out with somebody, they'd ask me, "What is this shit?" To which I'd simply answer, "The Destroyed," and I'd get that person another beer to help them enjoy the album more. If the White Stripes really put their money where their mouth is, they'd sound like The Destroyed instead of the ass-licking trendoids they are. Guitar/vocals vs. drums recorded at different times—I think. Sloppy as a Manwich, baby. Like it should be. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

**Dissection** "Reinkaos" *(The End, 331 Rio Grande #58, Salt Lake City, UT 84101)*. Dissection has a lot to live up to, and with the release of *De Infernali*, a lot to live down. Advance reviews of this album, or the previous EP by the band, were horrendous. People could not seem to heap enough venom and bitterness into the words describing *Reinkaos*. After listening to this album several times now and with several different people, I've come to the conclusion that this album is nowhere near as bad as people have made it out to be. This is a solid Death/Black Metal record, but it **is** different. Everyone wanted the return of *Storm of the Light's Bane*. Guess what? That just doesn't happen. At the Gates broke up because they felt they couldn't compete with their own *Slaughter of the Soul*. If you want *Storm*... listen to it, don't trash the band's other album because it doesn't sound like that. Eleven years and a prison sentence changes people, so it's without hesitation I understand the band's situation, not to mention there's only one member from that recording present. *Reinkaos* is a solid album that's far more musically diverse than any prior Dissection offering. There are more melodies and symphonic Black Metal parts, and it doesn't always have the bite of its predecessor's constant assault. There has been a direction of more classic Metal sounding guitar parts included and the vocals have a more Celtic Frost meets modern era Death Metal sound. The thing with this album is that it doesn't hold the "must listen" that *Storm*... does. It blends with everything a little more, so in that respect it isn't a great release. It's a good record that will be stuck in that pile of good records you own, not the pile of devastating albums you own. (CD)**-Myk**

**Divider** "At Twilight" *(Shock Value, 7 Larkspur Dr., Smithtown, NY 11787)*. Absolutely punishing Hardcore/Thrash/Metal that hails from right here in Long Island. Divider combines a stunning duel vocal attack with a brutal rhythm section and guitars that combine both old and new school Hardcore techniques, all of which adds up to one excellent record. Recorded by Kurt Ballou of Converge, *At Twilight* is a no-frills recording that isn't over the top—it just captures the band's sound at its rawest and most honest, and it's a something to be heard. The Hardcore/Metal genre isn't one I usually condone—let alone support—but in Divider's case, I have no problem making an exception. Excellent job all around. (CD)**-McClernon**

**+DOG+** "Fantasmas Mirandome" *(Rape Art Productions, c/o Javier F. Riera Navas, POB 05-01-268, Latacunga, Ecuador, South America)*. Always eager to listen to new Experimental Industrial Noise, I was pretty damn tickled when this ultra-rare (limited to 50 copies!) disc was sent my way. Using sound collected from various underground LA Noise acts, including members of Eckankore, Home Audience and Ancient Sound, Steve (the +DOG+ brain) constructs a sonic symphony in eight parts, an aural tapestry depicting a battle between high and low frequencies, rhythmic pulsing poised against static electronics. Extremely dark, lo-fi and sinister, I can't help but sit back and be hypnotized by the nightmarish swirl that seeps from my speakers—the sound inside a schizophrenic's head, or maybe what a pissed-off hippy on a bad acid trip hears. Either way, it's nice to know that Noise is still alive and well, if a tad more underground than before. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Dreamscapes of the Perverse** "Gignesthai" *(Tribunal, POB 49322, Greensboro, NC 27449).* What the Hell is going on in North Carolina? Not only do they seem to be churning out more bands than anywhere else, they're all really fucking heavy. Dreamscapes of the Perverse is as close as you'll find to a Norwegian Black Metal band in the vein of Dimmu Borgir or Cradle of Filth. They feature all the symphonic elements, all the clean and growled vocals, the complicated drum progressions and layered music. The band is not on the level of the two I mentioned yet, but they are one of the—if not **the**—best, I've heard come out of America in a long time. The band might even be closer in structure to Borknagar with the clean vocal lines. The music is atmospheric and fast, and structured down for the slower melodic parts. It is good to hear a band stepping up to this level from the States; check them out if they come to an area near you. (CD)-**Myk**

**End of A Year** "Sincerely" *(Revelation, POB 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232).* End of A Year have a mid '80's Dischord sound mixed with an updated sound. Musically, they're really good, and I like this more and more with each listen. But, once the vocals kick in, it seems like the songs don't vary much and sound too much alike. Don't get me wrong—this is a good disc with catchy tunes, but the vocals are somewhat monotone. (CD)-**Mr.Noiz**

**Envy** "Insomniac Doze" *(Temporary Residence, POB 60097, Brooklyn, NY 11208).* For those of you who prefer reviewers to cut to the chase, *Insomniac Doze,* the latest album from the legendary Japanese band Envy, is by far the album of the year. But, for those of you who need convincing, read on. Mixing the thunderous clamor of *Children of God*-era Swans with Isis and Pelican-esque Hardcore and the more atmospheric-inducing Post-Rock bands like Explosions In the Sky or Mono, this album is monolithic. Envy give the term "playing with raw emotion" a whole new meaning, as I've never heard a band deftly switch from quiet to loud with such vigor, precision and passion. I've had *Insomniac Doze* on repeat since it first found its way into my disc player. I'll say it again: album of the year. (CD)-**Andriani**

**Envy** "Insomniac Doze" *(Temporary Residence Ltd, POB 60097 Brooklyn, NY 11206*). Envy has a wide open Ambient sound (sort of like Sunny Day Real Estate meets Explosions In the Sky) but then a change in vocal style really wakes this band's style right up. On top of all that, the vocals are in Japanese. This is an excellent disc, which fans of labelmates Mono will also like.(CD)-**Mr.Noiz**

**Epoxies** *(Dirtnap, 2615 SE Clinton St., Portland, OR 97202).* What a tantalizing, euphorically infectious treat this is! Dirtnap Records has compiled onto one disc the two out-of-print Epoxies seven-inchers originally released on the label a few years back. These five songs represent, in my opinion, the most giddily vibrant Epoxies output in the band's history to date, and that's assuredly saying a lot since everything the Epoxies musically touch is pure radiant day-glo gold. The monotone robot-girl vocals, spastic space-alien Surf guitar, intergalactic satellite synthesizer, twitchy nuclear-charged bass, and futuristic snapping-whip drumbeats bring to mind the gloriously epileptic New Wave sounds of the early 1980s (not unlike Missing Persons, "Kids In America"-era Kim Wilde, The Vapors, and The Tourists). No wonder the Epoxies are enjoying such immense popularity and widespread media interest. They're fun, contagious, exhilarant, and lively. (CD)-**Moser**

**Evangelicals** "So Gone" *(Misra, 1405 Broadmoor Dr., Austin, Texas 78723).* The press release says broken-down computers were used to make this—okay. There are drums, vocals, sparse guitars, and synth bedding the whole thing. It's hard to categorize this, and I'm sure that's the point—it's also hard to get into. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Evergrey** "Monday Morning Apocalypse" *(Inside Out, 1601 Banksville Road 2nd Fl, Pittsburgh, PA 15216).* Pop Metal from abroad. I read somewhere (probably the always-reliable Internet) that this disc was Evergrey's attempt to find more commercial acceptance, and they certainly go less Power Metal and more Pop-based. "Unspeakable" could definitely find its way onto some playlists. If their goal was to write music that grabs a casual music fan's attention, they might succeed. This is a half a step removed from Radio Rock that I've heard too many times before. Not offensive, not bad, not brilliant and with some very basic, cliché-filled lyrics. Joy. (CD)-**KevTV**

**The Exclusivos** "Demos" *(Exclusivos, www.myspace.com/theexclusivos).* From the sinister concrete jungle of the Bronx comes what is quite possibly the oddest band I've heard since Arab On Radar—The Exclusivos. Combining Captain Beefheart insanity with arrangements reminiscent of early Fall, these five outsiders contort their way through eight songs that syncopate like the Birthday Party and trip out like some of the funkiest West African Psychedelia to actually made it to the States. Top it all off with a singer that delivers his lyrics with the mind-altered, yet controlled, monotone of Can's Malcolm Mooney and you're left wondering whether you're listening to a band or a music therapy session at Bellevue. I sincerely hope (believe) that this rough, raw recording is just an inkling of what will come in the future. To quote their song "The Ballad of Fred": "The lightning's always frightening when it comes before the thunder." This recording is the lightning. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Exene Cervenka and the Original Sinners** ""Sev7en" *(Nitro, 7071 Warner Avenue, F-736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647).* Back with nearly an entirely new backing band, Exene Cervenka, best known for being the co-leader in X, is back and better than ever. In my opinion, the first two X records are just about as perfect as an album can get—I challenge anybody to find a flaw in either. *Sev7en* is the follow-up to the Original Sinners debut in 2002, and is infinitely better than that record. While the debut had some great tunes, it also had some filler, which prevented it from getting continuous spins. That won't be the case with *Sev7en.* In the same vein as the debut, Exene Cervenka continues to explore her fascination with late '70's California Punk, but now mixed heavily with Rockabilly and '50's Rock n' Roll, i.e., Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly. All in all, she gets passing marks across the board, with great tunes and her distinct voice, which still makes me weak in the knees. I couldn't be happier with this. (CD)-**McClernon**

**The Fabulous Rudies** *(www.fabrudies.com).* The group name suggests Ska—or some sort of a Ska-like revival band— but of course I was wrong. Very wrong. Sure, there are Ska riffs, horns and an organ backing up the female-fronted vocals, but this is just crap; the vocals don't complement the instrumental portion of the record at all. There's some guy rapping over a track or two, there's a song glorifying Richard Gere and there's a cover of "99 Luft Ballons" that's accompanied by a chorus chanting "Oi, oi, oi!" This is really fuckin' terrible. If you value your general well-being don't listen to this record. Ever. (CD)-**Manic**

**Fake H** *(Fake H, POB 3101, South Amboy, NJ 08879).* I have to say, this CD makes quite a nice package. I mean, you get this card-stock envelope—the flap glues shut with that jism that holds pre-approved credit cards to their generic letters—and inside there's a picture of the band, a bio and a CD with a subway pic on the cover. I especially like opening and closing the envelope flap because it opens and closes without destroying anything. Black card-stock is cool because it's sturdy while remaining mysterious, and when the band's logo is engraved in red ink, it looks even cooler. Dude. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Final Conflict** "Ashes to Ashes" *(SOS, POB 3017 Corona, CA 92878).* The good people at SOS Records have reissued Final Conflict's classic ripper for all to savor. For the uninitiated, Final Conflict was one of the preeminent Southern California DIY Hardcore/Punk bands of the mid-to-late 1980s. Absolutely punishing, Thrash-influenced spikes n' studs anthems commenced en masse, with warp speed shredding and fist-in-the air anthems abound. Though bands like Crucifix and GBH played a prominent role in their relentless barrage, Final Conflict maintained a reverence for the more anthemic side of early '80s British Punk (English Dogs et al), and that love for the almighty hook came across in spades. This is one of my favorite recordings of the era, and this reissue certainly does it justice. (CD)-**Ramek**

**The First Step** "What We Know" *(Rivalry, www.rivalryrecords.com).* Could a new Youth Crew revival be on the horizon? It seems unlikely, but this release from The First Step, their best yet, should satiate fans of the sub-genre. *What We Know* is a stripped down affair that resolutely sticks to the "Spirit of '88" formula but offers enough hooks, shout-alongs, and creativity to render the process gratifying. The production on this effort is powerful, a raw and unadorned assault that adds a sense of spontaneity to the simple messages of camaraderie, struggle, and drug-free living herein. (CD)-**Ramek**

**The Framed** "Countless Ways of Self-Destruction" *(Reality Clash, POB 491, Dana Point, CA 92629).* Yup, somebody spent way too much time listening to Bad Religion and Social Distortion and decided to form a band. I have to admit, vocalist Matt with the Hat's Greg Graffin impersonation is pretty damn dead-on, but mimicry is all it amounts to, down to the group vocals and the lame Mike Ness solos. I think I'll toss this one in the "shit to give away" pile. Any takers? (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**GBH** "Punk Junkies" *(SOS, POB 3017, Corona, CA 92878).* It's not exactly *City Baby Attacked By Rats*, but this latter-era GBH material (circa 1996) finds the band alive and ripping with their unadorned, rough-hewn "Hard Punk" sound more or less intact. GBH's distinctive, barbaric riff battery (not quite Thrash, not quite D-Beat, but somewhere in between) is as menacing as ever, with a predictably morbid lyrical scheme that seals the deal. For its strengths, however, the new material just isn't as memorable or powerful as the band's classic repertoire. Considering the glut of bands that re-form after years of inactivity with disastrous results, however, this record is a pleasant surprise. (CD)-**Ramek**

**GG Allin And Antiseen** "Murder Junkies" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* With the lawless help of TKO and Antiseen, GG Allin is madly spurting blood, shamelessly defecating in his hand and smearing it in the face of conformity, and brutally raging with a psycho mad-dog vengeance from the flaming pits of Hell. *Murder Junkies* is a frightfully revolting reissue of the original 1991 classic, viciously embellished with five bonus cuts from the *Violence Now* 7" and the GG Allin and The Carolina Shitkickers EP. Ya get 15 sonically corrosive tales of sodomy, murder, mutilation, and mayhem from the outrageously violent Charles Manson of Scum Rock and his demon-eyed, shotgun-toting hillbilly cohorts. *Murder Junkies* is a blazing bona fide fistful of menacing, grimacing whup-ass from the grave of GG Allin and the hills of Carolina. (CD)-**Moser**

**GG Allin and Antiseen** "Murder Junkies" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* Holy fuck, this is brutal! I'm sure there's many of you out there who never appreciated GG's antics, lyrical inspiration, defecating on stage, or sticking drumsticks up his ass, and that's fine. However, if that's the case, I suggest you stop reading now, because when this was first recorded back in 1991, this was perhaps his most intense, violent material yet, which makes perfect sense when you have Confederacy of Scum founders Antiseen as your backing band. *Murder Junkies* is raw as fuck, blood-soaked Rock n' Roll at its finest that pulls no punches from start to finish. Some people sing about the sleazy, dangerous side of life, trying to romanticize it—Allin lived it and Antiseen continues to live it, without making it look or sound pretty for one second. (CD)-**McClernon**

**Glory of This** *(Indianola, 815 Gornto Rd, Valdosta, GA 31602).* Read my review of Perish, add some lighter moments, throw in some more anthemic vocals, then garnish with cleaner Emo-ish vocals. I'm too lazy to review similar albums twice. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Golden Bear** *© Side, www.c-siderecords.com).* I'll be honest. This record took me a few listens to get into, but once I did I was pretty pleased. Golden Bear play melodic Indie Rock with vocalizations remind of Sloan while the predominantly Rock-based song structures mingle with various textured sounds that gives the songs an early Mercury Rev or a more rocking Beachwood Sparks touch. Golden Bear doesn't shy away from adding subtle accompaniment by either horns, keyboard or even the stray garble of digitally-processed sound effects. If you're looking for some solid Indie Rock that you can tap to, look no further than Golden Bear. (CD)-**Andriani**

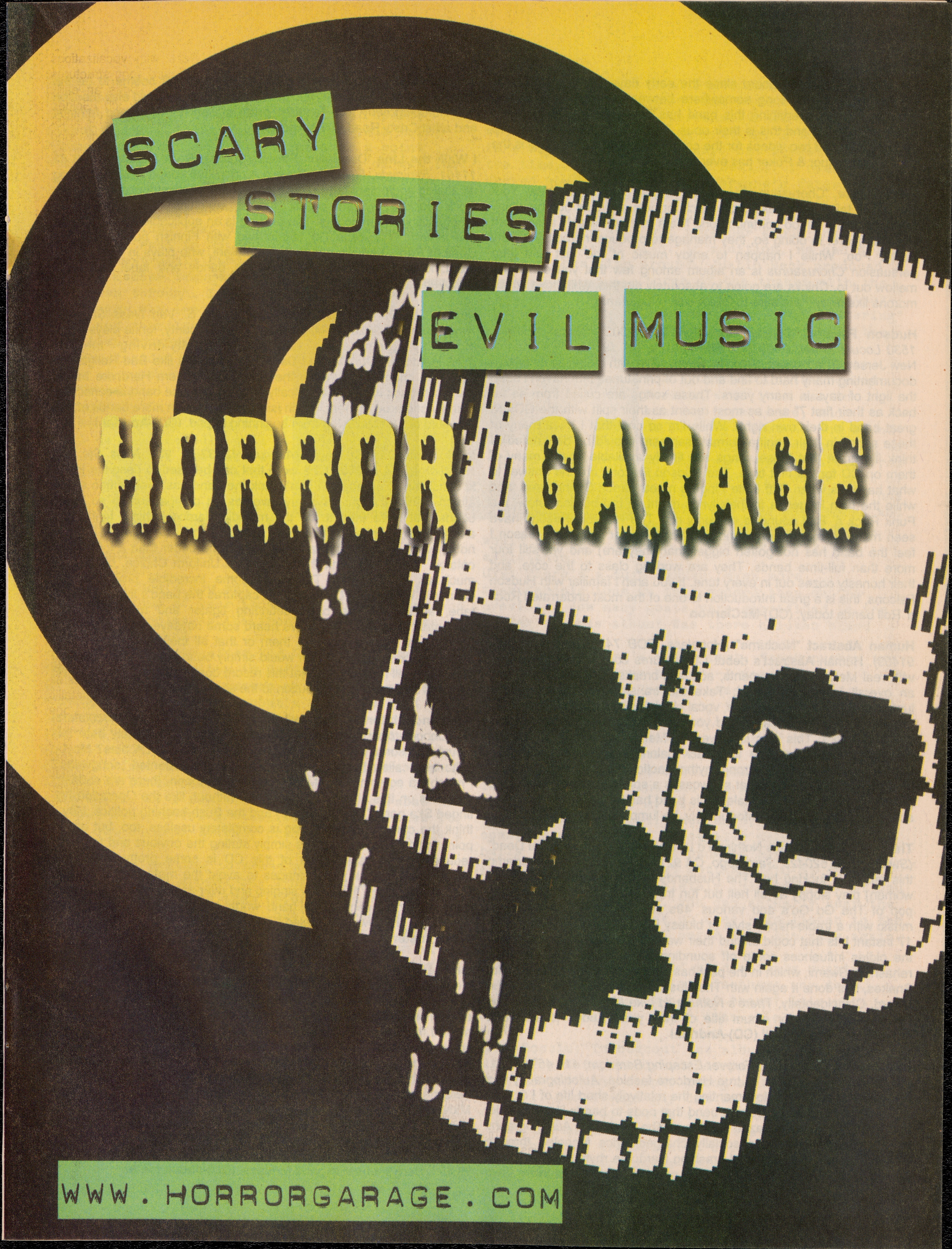
**The Golden Gods** "The Thorny Crown of Rock And Roll" *(The Control Group, 3414 Fremont Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98103).* Far from being just another Stoner Rock band, The Golden Gods attack '70's Rock with the technical fury of Grand Funk at their best (the self-titled red album, muthafucka!) and the sonic intensity of early Blue Cheer (*Vincebus Eruptum*). Heavy as Mountain, but ass-kicking as the MC5, this power-trio, who I assume took their name from the infamous Robert Plant quote, puts shame to all the crap that's pumped on Classic Rock airwaves these days, namely Pearl Jam, Creed and Nickelback. I prefer bands with balls of brass, or in this case—solid gold baby. Worship is only the beginning. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Gorgoroth** "Ad Majorem Sathanas Gloriam" *(Candlelight US, POB 707, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462).* Well, the band does enjoy a far superior recording on this album than on most of their earlier albums. They also have Frost from Satyricon on drums here. Musically, there are many more melodic parts, at least for Gorgoroth. Reviewing a Gorgoroth record is like reviewing Marduk or Mortician; you always know what you're getting. Marduk plays faster than any band alive, and they do it on every song. Mortician plays the heaviest Death Metal in existence, with lots of samples and gurgled vocals. Gorgoroth play Black Metal that's one step descended from Darkthrone. Gaahl is still on vocals and Infernus is still playing bass. Gorgoroth is one of the remaining bands of the original triumvirate Gorgoroth, Marduk, and Darkthrone (you can try and bolster with Mayhem as well, but some have given up on them) that still exist and still play the music that made them infamous. Forget all these "cult" bands that pop up and release a demo after 17 years in existence. This is the real deal. Once again, they bring the evil. (CD)-**Myk**

**Harlots** "This Is the Second Death" *(Corrosive, www.corrosiverecordings.com).* Well, they cite Discordance Axis as an influence, and this outfit does play some fairly spastic metallic Hardcore/Grind/Thrash, but this really isn't as groundbreaking as one might hope. Plenty of skewed tempo shifts, warp speed percussion, and frantic vocal screeches permeate the recording, but there is a derivative quality to the fracas not wholly unlike the same-y Metalcore of Curl Up and Die. This is technically adept, make no mistake about it, but the mind-melting psychosis of their forebearers is rarely realized here. And what's up with those lackluster Emo instrumentals? Come on, guys...(CD)-**Ramek**

**Hella** "Acoustics EP" *(Kill Rock Stars, www.killrockstars.com).* Some of the better Post-Rock-influenced warbling I've heard in a while is delivered by Sacramento, California's own Hella. In contrast to the feedback-soaked lunacy of years gone by, the *Acoustics* EP features a number of re-recorded songs by the group which provide less embellished and more...well, **acoustic** extrapolations on their jittery, percussion-intensive spazz attacks. The skronk is more or less out of the picture this time around, with ultra distorto-axe licks replaced by feedback-free fretboard melting virtuosity, and rhythmic cacophony to spare. I actually prefer this outing to their more overtly aggressive projects...the band's craft and quirkiness comes to the fore as never before. (CD)-**Ramek**

**Hellacopters** "Rock and Roll Is Dead" *(Liquor & Poker, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* I've been a Hellacopters fan from the first note I ever heard them play. They've always been that vicious, nasty Scandinavian Rock band that promoted all things that were great about Rock and Roll, but nothing could prepare me for this. The Hellacopters have cleaned up their act, dove head first back into the '70s and done of one the best Rock records in 30 years, definitely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the best Hellacopters record since the early days. "Everything Is On TV" is just a stellar song somewhere between Frampton, Kiss and Clapton. This is everything this band has been leading up to. Their muse has landed and this is their opus. This US version contains two bonus tracks and two videos for the computer. Hand's down, this is the best record Liquor & Poker has ever released. (CD)-**Myk**

**Hello Nurse** "Chorusaurus" *(www.hellonurse.com)*. This New York City group takes your basic Indie Rock formula and cuts out the whiny bullshit and the all too common song fillers that are closely associated with the genre. In doing so, they manage to produce incredibly catchy Power Pop. While I happen to enjoy music of the fast and loud persuasion *Chorusaurus* is an album among few that you can really mellow out to. Chicks are going to absolutely dig this, while love struck morons like myself are sure to follow suit. (CD)-**Manic**

**Hudson Falcons** "Singles Collection 1997-2002" *(Street Anthem, 1530 Locust Street, PMB 218, Philadelphia, PA 19102)*. The pride of New Jersey, The Hudson Falcons, return here with a singles collection documenting many hard to find and out of print tunes that haven't seen the light of days in many years. These songs are culled from as far back as their first 7" and as most recent as their split with the GC5 (a great band in their own right). While I'm so cool that I have many of these songs in their original format (sarcasm should be duly noted), I think it's great that these songs are finally available again, many of them on CD for the first time. The Hudson Falcons are the answer to what happens when Stiff Little Fingers meets Bruce Springsteen, and while the Irish influence in their lyrics might all but be gone now, the Punk Rock n' Roll sound is certainly not. The Hudson Falcons have seen many members come and go over the year (the main reason I feel the band has not gotten bigger than they are) and yet still tour more than full-time bands. They are working class to the core, and their honesty oozes out in every tune. If you aren't familiar with Hudson Falcons, this is a great introduction to one of the most underrated Rock n' Roll bands today. (CD)-**McClernon**

**Human Abstract** "Nocturne" *(Hopeless, POB 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409)*. Human Abstract's debut CD features complex arrangements with real Metal guitar moments, acoustic breaks here and there, and an overall experimental feel. Take the transitions of Opeth, guitar lunacy of Dillinger Escape Plan, vocal choruses of Avenged Sevenfold, and Metal force of Unearth, and you have a decent idea of what this can sound like. This disc is played by Metal fans with a hunger for inventive songwriting. The title track balances between Death and Improv Jazz, unified by a strong rhythm section, before coming around to a straightforward song that showcases a solid (non-wankering) lead playing by AJ Minette. The talent this band has far exceeds that of the scene they will probably, unfortunately, be lumped in to. (CD)-**KevTV**

**The Husbands** "There's Nothing I'd Like More Than to See You Dead" *(Swami, POB 620428, San Diego, CA 92162)*. Great balls of fire, damn this record is fucking hot! The Husbands (which is ironically a trio of women) play sloppy as all hell but fun trashy Rock n' Roll. Mixing the pop of The Go Go's and various '40s and '50s vocal-based group music with a treble-happy style of bluesy Rock, The Husbands deliver 17 instant hits that could all find their way on to a 45 single, and all of the oldies influences come off sounding fresh as opposed to being rehashed. Swami, which in the past has struck gold with bands like Hot Snakes, has done it again with The Husbands and this infectiously fun record. Coincidentally, *There's Nothing I'd Like More Than to See You Dead,* is my pick for album title of their year. Kudos to everyone involved with this project! (CD)-**Andriani**

**I Spoke** "Autobiography" *(Forever Escaping Boredom, 416 45th St. Ct., W. Palmetto, FL 34221)*. In true Hardcore fashion, *Autobiography* is a posthumous collection documenting the relatively short life of I Spoke, a Canadian Hardcore Screamo band that nods to bands like Kaospilot and a less technically-crazed version of The Assistant. *Autobiography* is rife with politically and socially charged lyrics funneled through whirling sounds of violent and crashing Hardcore rhythms. The urgent female vocal delivery lends a genuine passion rarely heard these days when a male yahoo screaming his head heads off seems to be the norm. This record is short, but it's ever so sweet. I should also mention that *Autobiography* also features great artwork by renowned feminist and artist Cristy Road. (CD)-**Andriani**

**I Walk the Line** "Desolation Street" *(Combat Rock Industry, POB 65 11101, Riihimaki, Finland)*. There's a crisp, full sound recorded using all analog equipment here. This Finnish band plays stripped-back Punk Rock backed by an organ, further enriching their sound and emphasizing the melodies. Toe-tapping is an applicable description for this album. This issue I'm two-for-two with Finnish punk bands on Combat Rock, partially run by guitarist Jani, who plays in both I Walk the Line and Manifesto Jukebox. His bands and label are great discoveries. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Ignite** "Our Darkest Days" *(Abacus, 12333 S. Van Ness Ste 102, Hawthorne, CA 90250)*. Hailing from Orange County, Ignite plays some incredibly memorable, heartfelt-yet-vocally-driving melodic Punk/Hardcore. *Our Darkest Days* to me sounds like Bad Religion or Seaweed channeled through the sounds of modern Hardcore bands like Comeback Kid. This is lyrically uplifting, and the band is conscious of the world around them, which is something I wish more bands of this ilk would be. A solid listen from beginning to end. (CD)-**Andriani**

**Ignite** "Our Darkest Days" *(Abacus, 12333 S. Van Ness Ste.102, Hawthorne, CA 90250)*. One word that can be used to describe Ignite is consistent. Personally, I don't think the band has ever written a bad album. While I might have my favorites, in comparison to so many bands that have tried to do the melodic Hardcore thing, Ignite has always been infinitely better, even at their worst. *Our Darkest Days* is no different, save for the fact that it might be better than a lot of their catalog. Yes, I still think they sound like Uniform Choice, but not as much as in the past. Thanks to some incredible production by Cameron Webb, *Our Darkest Days* captures the band's live energy on tape, along with the band sounding tighter and more musically competent than ever. While I've heard some naysayers argue that the band's best days are behind them or that all their songs sound the same, my comeback to them would simply be to listen to *Our Darkest Days*, and tell me honestly that this record doesn't inspire you to get off your ass and make a contribution to the scene. (CD)-**McClernon**

**The Inoculators** "Dropped Their Brains" *(The Inoculators, www.inoculators.com)*. By all accounts, I should absolutely hate this album, yet somehow I don't. Maybe it's my inherent LA bias? Maybe guitarist/vocalist Murphy Lynch really **is** a talented songwriter? Probably a combination of both and more. I mean, there are certainly elements on this album that I could do without, like the Operation Ivy-tinged Ska parts (I HATE SKA!!!) and the Bush-bashing politics. Hey, I think the current administration is completely useless, too, but at this point writing songs about it is simply stating the obvious and tediously redundant. That said, most of this CD is some pretty aggressive melodic Punk Rock that manages to avoid the most obnoxious Pop Punk conventions, like whiny singing and over-achieving guitar playing. They certainly seem like a band worth catching live, especially on songs like the Dwarves-fueled "That Could Be Me." Not bad. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Israel Gripka** "Demo" *(Israel Gripka, www.israelgripka.com)*. I had the pleasure of seeing this incredibly talented Country Folk singer at a show I played in Manhattan. He took the stage with an acoustic guitar, a harmonica bolted around his neck and a beer, told us he'd just moved from Missouri, he didn't know anybody and he was gonna play some songs for us. Admittedly, I was worried that I was about to be tortured by another bozo who thought he was Bob Dylan, but halfway through the first verse of the first song, my fears were defeated as I became enraptured in the Stones-like Country riffs and the raspy Midwestern voice belting out lyrics as scathing as anything by a young Leonard Cohen or as beautiful as young Roy Harper. The CD EP I'm listening to now is an all too brief taste of the brilliance of this young songwriter, who, with the right timing and luck, has the potential to be HUGE. Here's a beer to good fortunes. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**The Itch** "The Courage to Be Hated" *(Wee Rock, POB 333, Springfield, MO 65801)*. I was in awe when listening to this record, the reason being that there's nothing remotely appealing about the 18 tracks that litter this piece of shit. The music's incredibly sloppy and off-key and I didn't care much for the vocals. There are a few instrumental tracks on here, but lord knows why. I mean, if you're going to record an instrumental track you'd better make sure that the playing ability of each of the band's members is up to par, so the music will keep the listener interested despite the obvious omission of vocals. The Itch doesn't do that at all. I really dislike this release, and there's probably more that needs to be said here, but I'm not even going to waste my fuckin' time. This is absolutely awful. The end. (CD)-**Manic**

**Jil Station** "Still Love" *(The Platform Group, POB 8669, Red Bank, NJ 07701)*. These guys sure do love the often dreary Alt-Rock scene. Inspired by artists such as Bowie and Radiohead, Jil Station have the catchy-but-depressing chorus approach down solid. These competent songs stand on their own, but to me, they do just that—stand there, as this too frequently sounds like the soundtrack for a warm bath and a razor. This is music that Steve Buscemi's character in *Billy Madison* would listen to while contemplating all those who have wronged him. (CD)-**KevTV**

**The Johns** "In Tune" *(Anko, POB 1799, Costa Mesa, CA 92628)*. At one time or another, the members of The Johns have raucously strutted their stuff in Die Hunns, The Pushers, The Grabbers, The Bleeders, The Crowd, and ADZ. Wow, what an impressive Punk Rock resume indeed! The three songs on this 7" slice of pink plastic ("In Tune," "Crapped Out," and "Wanna Die") are sleazy, grimy, snarling tales of booze-addled excess, wild devil-may-care recklessness, and nihilistic backstreet debauchery. It's Bowery-style, junkie Punk Rock n' Roll in black leather, splattered with spray paint, and carved to perfection by a switchblade and dirty hypodermic needles. I thank the devil below that The Johns are enthusiastically continuing the brilliantly tattered Rock n' Roll tradition of the Dead Boys and Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers. (7")-**Moser**

**Killed By the Bull** "The Princess Rides the Bull Into Holy Hell" *(Koi, 18600 South Parkview #1836, Houston, TX 77084)* .One of my favorite new bands around today, Killed By the Bull follow up their excellent self-titled debut with this six song EP that's even harder and faster than their previous work. The band reminds me a lot of *Re-Inventing Axl Rose*-era Against Me, early Modest Mouse, as well as Jersey-bred acts like Johnny X and the Conspiracy and Sticks & Stones. This band has yet to write a bad tune. My only problem here is that six tracks is not nearly enough to keep me satisfied. These cats are constantly playing out on the East Coast, so it would be in your best interest to check them out ASAP! (CD)-**McClernon**

**The Killer** "Better Judged By Twelve Than Carried By Six" *(Organized Crime, POB 213, Brookfield, IL 60513)*. Heavy metallic Hardcore with a slightly caustic Thrash vibe thrown in. Not bad, but there is too much chugging and mosh here for my taste. At their gloomiest and most dramatic these guys pull off the modern Hardcore thing well enough, but all too often this record succumbs to generic tough guy posturing, Metalcore drudgery, and generic vocal garbling. (CD)-**Ramek**

**Lamb of God** "Sacrament" *(Epic, 550 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022)*. The worst song on this album is the single, "Redneck," but that track is not indicative of other songs on this release. I won't tell you that this is the equal of *Ashes of the Wake*; it lacks the sheer brutality of that record. But, this album is more melodic than its predecessors. The album is still really fast, and the songs maintain the same sort of structure, but it doesn't have that monumental track that has made Lamb of God the legendary live experience they have become. There's a lot more groove going on, sort of like their Richmond brethren Alabama Thunderpussy. Randy's vocals are right on, and he hasn't lost a step. The recording is excellent (as you would expect) and you can count on people still killing themselves in time to this. After four releases, including Burn the Priest, everyone can have a soft spot; the real test is **how** soft. In my mind, this is Lamb of God's weakest release so far, but that said, it's like *Seasons In the Abyss* being Slayer's weakest release. You still listen to it, you still love it, it just isn't the top for that band. You'll still listen to it instead 98% of the rest of your record collection. These guys are the real deal, and one of the best bands in the game. (CD)-**Myk**

**Landspeedrecord!** "Intermission" *(Ambiguous City!/Morphius, 100 E. 23rd St., Baltimore, MD 21218)*. I'm a bit perplexed by this quirky Art-Rock band, who decided to reissue this 2004 release with an extra bonus disc of out-of-print and previously unreleased songs to celebrate their 10 years of existence. On one hand, the syncopated Post-Punk with cello is certainly original and different in that later Fugazi way. On the other hand, the songs reek of self-important arrogance, and my distaste for such narcissistic indulgence is overpowering my desire to enjoy the songs on their own terms. I guess I shouldn't have read the lyrics—my mistake. This is a band that should appeal to people who think very highly of themselves and think they're more important than everybody else because they listen to music like this. It ain't me, babe. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Left Alone** "Dead American Radio" *(Hellcat, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026)*. I recall saying that Left Alone's debut CD sounded like standard Warped Tour Punk, and the opener here, "The Sinner," reinforces my initial opinion. These guys really love Rancid too. They're on Rancid's label, and "City to City" features and is co-written by Tim Armstrong. Left Alone broadened their sound a bit on this disc, bringing in some more Ska-ish instruments like organ and sax. They also use standup bass on "Done Wrong," which turns out to be the most interesting track, as the faint slide guitar during the chorus helps elevate the Rockabilly-tinged song. Overall though, it's pretty standard Punk. Did I mention they **love** Rancid? (CD)-**KevTV**

**Manifesto Jukebox** *(Combat Rock Industry, POB 65 11101, Riihimaki, Finland)*. Without relying on overused Punk Rock-isms like super-distorted guitar and over-the-top vocals, Manifesto Jukebox are much more concerned with true punk ideals and attitude, at times evoking comparisons to Hot Water Music. Their music features two guitars that play complementary to one another—one rhythm and one performing more lead work throughout the song. The lyrics revolve around a bleak outlook on life and an urgent message that change needs to happen. A high-quality release from abroad. **KevTV**

**Mannequin Men** "Showbiz Witch" *(www.mannequinmen.com)*. *Showbiz Witch* is an incandescent ball of Post-Punk energy delivered promptly by Chicago's Mannequin Men. This album is riddled with Punk Rock underpinnings but displays a more experimental approach rather than the expected chugga chugga of today's bands. This record is raw, untouched and powerful. If the Violent Femmes had a stripped down cousin, these guys would be it. (CD)-**Manic**

**Masters of the Lunaverse** "The Anonymous EP" *(Masters of the Lunaverse, www.mastersofthelunaverse.com)*. Here's something you don't hear everyday—a Brooklyn-based Post-Punk band that's not simply trying to imitate the Strokes or the Rapture or the Killers. Rather, as the opening track, "Anonymous," states, "I'd rather make myself anonymous then be synonymous with you." It's an assertion that stays true through the four songs on this disc, beginning with the opening Chameleons UK-style lead guitar. The songs tell bitter tales of defiant alienation, both from the world and from one's own self. "Don't Tell Me What to Do With My Life" could have been done by LA's forgotten E Coli with all its quiet stops and starts and sneering drone. It's nice to hear a band be painfully personal while simultaneously writing music with balls. I like. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Milky Ways** *(Alive, POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)*. Featuring members of the Spaceshits, Del-Gators, and Sexareenos, the Milky Ways put the stomp to the dirt and come out whirling like a mangy, distortion-deformed monster. A brain-melting, flesh-tingling plethora of primal warped vocals, psycho-fuzz guitars, earth-trembling bass and drum rhythms, and funky butt-shaking organ riffage insanely gathers in a demented, animalistic orgy of Garage Rock furor that sends shockwaves straight through the stratosphere and into unknown galaxies far, far away. I doubt I'll ever fully recover my senses, but who cares?! (CD)-**Moser**

**Mitra** "All Gods Kill" *(Idol, POB 720043, Dallas, TX 75372)*. Featuring former members of Speedealer, Billyclub, Pervis, and Rigor Mortis, you can bet your sweet bippies that Mitra rocks and roars with an unstoppable balls-out fury. Mitra's *All Gods Kill* is a sludgy, smoldering Metal meltdown with brawny, Doom-heavy, hellfire riffs and ferociously growling demon-claw vocals. The rotund thundering rhythm section packs an explosive wallop comparable to an atomic bomb detonating in my backyard and pulverizing my bones to crystallized ashes within mere seconds. Gee, thanks a lot, Mitra, for twisting my soul into a state of permanent disarray while damaging my ears beyond repair. (CD)-**Moser**

**The Modern Machines** "Take It, Somebody!" *(Dirtnap, 2615 SE Clinton St., Portland, OR 97202)*. The Modern Machines have a firm, steady grip on a sound that's robustly steeped in Midwestern flannel Punk and boozy, '80s-style Alternative Rock. It's all-at-once gritty, grizzled, melodic, and buoyantly upbeat like a zany slapstick pool hall brawl between The Replacements, Mudhoney, and Dead Milkmen. Blood, beer, and unabashed swaggering recklessness... *Take It, Somebody!* is a tough and snotty burst of basement party music for the unemployed and the disenchanted... to be guzzled with sweaty fervor. (CD)-**Moser**

**The Modern Machines** "Take It, Somebody" *(Dirtnap, 2615 SE Clinton St., Portland, OR 97202)*. Umm, arguably the best album of the year thus far—what do you think of that? The Modern Machines have received stunning accolades and praise anywhere they go (which is everywhere if you take a look at their tour schedule), and for good reason. They are simply a great Rock band that takes the styles of Husker Du and the Replacements, mixes it with some Country twang and makes it all their own. On *Take It, Somebody*, the Mo-Macs (as they've often been referred to) certainly aren't reinventing the wheel, but it's also not easy playing Punk Rock this infectious over the span of an entire record. While *Take It, Somebody* isn't as manic and fast-paced as their previous efforts (much like the bands they take their cues from), the energy level hasn't been lost, and the songwriting has even improved, if that were possible. The Modern Machines, along with bands like The Ergs and Toys That Kill, are beginning to force people to open their eyes once again to straight up Punk Rock. (CD)-**McClernon**

**Mon Frere** "Blood, Sweat and Swords" *(Cake, POB 1801, Tacoma, WA 98401)*. While the lineup of vocalist/keyboardist, bassist and drummer may be somewhat out of the ordinary for an Indie Punk band, I swear I've heard every hook from every song on this CD on the local Hard Rock radio station. Come to think of it, Mon Frere is like the Styx/Kansas version of Indie Post-Punk, maybe less annoying. Really, they're not all that bad, just completely unoriginal and predictably generic, despite the female vocals and electric piano. Evanescence meets Tori Amos? Eh. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Morning 40 Federation** "Ticonderoga" *(www.m80music.com)*. *Ticonderoga* is a ribald blast of drunken revelry in the flamboyant form of pimped-out Funk Rock grooves and soulful *Super Fly* schmaltz. It's a musical fuzzy-dice Mardi Gras celebration with day-glo gelatin crawfish wildly dancing in the street and giddily tossing beaded eyeball necklaces to the sin-frenzied children of perdition. A brass band suddenly marches into the mix with a cacophony eloquently called Cabaret, and then the revered grandmaster known as Rock n' Roll struts around like a lion on the prowl for fresh poon. I'm blurry-eyed drunk with glee and staggering to nowhere in particular as the trippin', corkscrew-crazy sounds of Morning 40 Federation slap me on the back and merrily send me on my way. (CD)-**Moser**

**Mouth of the Architect** "The Ties That Blind" *(Translation Loss, 342 Firethorn Circle, Harleysville, PA 19438)*. I knew with this band's debut release that we were all in for something special. Now upon the band's third release (they did a split CD between the two full-lengths) they've proven me correct. Mouth of the Architect has had two original members leave, one guitar player that was not replaced and a bass player that was replaced by Brian Cook, of Botch/These Arms Are Snakes fame. Add to that a guest appearance on vocals by Brent Hinds of Mastadon and the album being recorded by Chris Common of TAAS and you know this is a strong release. Ethereal but heavy, the album is somewhere between Isis, Neurosis, Mastadon, and Sunn 0))). More melodic than any of the bands I mentioned, the band has removed many of the blistering, thundering Metal parts and focused on the transient melodies that give the songs strong structures. While the album does have vocals, much of the 66 minutes are devoid of words much like Coliseum and Pelican. Where bands like Khanate are just slow and have heavy riffs, this is heavy in a much different way. It gets into your head and engulfs you and you anticipate the next riff with baited breath. These guys are tough to compare with anyone, but if you like any of the bands I mentioned, you need to hear this album. (CD)-**Myk**

**Mr. Nogatco aka Kool Keith** "Nogatco RD" *(Insomniac, POB 592722, Orlando, FL 32859)*. The best rapper in the universe reinvents himself yet again as a comic book Area 51-type B-movie mad scientist. While I've always respected the experimentation that went into some of Kool Keith's post-Ultramagnetic MCs work, I still find albums like *Matthew* and *Spankmaster* to be difficult listening. Fortunately, in this collaboration with Iz-Real, Kool Keith returns to Space Hop and does his best work since Dr. Octagon and *Black Elvis/Lost in Space*. Musically, the album nods heavily to later Kraftwerk albums like *Computerworld* and *Electric Café*. Whether commenting on the world's Internet obsession while asserting his place in the Rap world in "Alpha Omega (The Beginning)" or exploring Burroughsian sci-fi surrealism in "Dark Space," Kool Keith is in top form as the voice of Mr. Nogatco. Anyone who has given up on the master of complex absurdist rhymology would be doing themselves a favor by picking up this album. It is definitely NOT a disappointment. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Nazi Dogs** "Chase the Man" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)*. Trashy Garage Punk hasn't sounded this good in years. Attacking '70s Punk riffs with the same sloppy abandon as the first Damned album, these four German lads play Punk the way it used to be before '77 Punk became a certified style of music. Amid blistering originals like "Hookers" and "Wasted," the Nazi Dogs take time out to blast through the Pagans' "What's This Shit Called Love," Devo's "Mongoloid" and the Suicide Kings' "Suicide King." It's a drunken, pint-drinking party, a keg of Spaten rupturing in the middle of the room. Grab a beer and enjoy! (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Negative Reaction** "Under the Ancient Penalty" *(Devil Doll, POB 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853)*. Negative Reaction has a new CD out, in case you haven't heard. By far it is their best recording to date—eight tracks of high-energy Sludge, like a pressure cooker exploding in your face. Brutal as Black Sabbath's *Master of Reality*, menacing as the Melvins' *Houdini*, the songs shove their fist deep into your stomach, grab an organ (a liver? a spleen?) and tear it out, laughing as they take a bite and you pass out from the loss of blood. OD certainly proves himself to be a worthy addition as new bassist, providing a wall of rumble so low that the Pacific Ocean is gasping for air. Ken-E Bones shrieks his vocals with the agony of an innocent man being disemboweled, his guitar a battle-axe wielded by a drunken Viking who's trying to finish the pillaging so the real party can begin. Holding the chaos together is drummer O Mac, the anchor of a sinking ship who can do nothing but watch as the monstrous vessel slowly submerges, only to crush him into nothing. This is raw emotion in its purest form—a symphony of hatred, self-loathing and disgust that makes Trent Reznor look like SpongeBob SquarePants. Buy this disc and feed the beast, but be careful—he may bite. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**The Nerve!** *(Heyday, POB 2557, Temecula, CA 92593).* Wow! Why have I never heard of this band? There's no justice in the world, I tell you! The Nerve have been at it for 10 years and they've just been signed to Indie stalwarts Heyday Records. Ya gotta give them credit just for sticking it out this long. And it's credit well deserved, judging by this CD. The three members are superb musicians who don't let their chops get in the way of the song writing. Guitarist/vocalist Randy Nerve belts his lyrics like Paul Westerberg if the Minnesotan could sing on-key, his guitar effortlessly slipping between badass Punk Rock riffage and mean Keith Richard-like licks. Joe Nerve is the John Entwistle of the band, complementing Randy's guitar work with bass lines that could be solos in their own right. Holding the band down is Santo Nerve—about as good as a Rock drummer gets without being overly flashy. The best thing about this band is that they love what they're doing and they're so happy to be doing it, and that passion comes across in the music and is infectious. I typically despise happy music, but these guys do it right—with BALLS. And check out the amazing cover of the Rolling Stones' "Citadel." It puts the Damned's version to shame. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**The Others Ran** "Die Pretty" *(www.myspace.com/theothersran).* This has to be the most painful listening experience of my entire life, and I loved every fucking minute of it! *Die Pretty* is a collection of eight fuzzed-out feedback-riddled slices of loud, obnoxious Post-Punk Punk that mixes the ear-splitting sonic wonder of bands like godheadsilo and Big Business while recording all in a hiss-filled, lo-fi trashy Rock style like Pussy Galore. I'd go as far to say that this band is this generation's Flipper. The Others Ran can give any hipster noise touting collective a run for its money with their pure, no frills Rock approach. And to think, I had this CD sitting on my desk for months untouched—fucking shame on me! (CD)-**Andriani**

**Partisan** "The Gothic and the Gospel" *(Reason Y, 2871 Royal Bluff, Decatur, GA 30030).* Let me begin by stating that I never ever imagined that I would hear a Punk/Hardcore version of Afro-Beat master Fela Kuti. Yet somehow, this group of eight multi-instrumentalists from Georgia (the Southern state, not the ex-Russian state) manages to pull off such an astounding feat. From the opening *Red Medicine*-era Fugazi style scorcher through the full on Fela march of "Georgia Goddamn" to the final jagged Gang of Four meets Latin Jazz sounds of "Wolf Smoke," Partisan has assembled quite an impressive collection of music. My only complaint is that one of the vocalists sounds like he's doing an Ian MacKaye impression, which gets pretty irritating. I noticed that David Axelrod produced the album. Is it the same Jazz guy who wrote and arranged the Electric Prunes' *Mass in F Minor*? Interesting... (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Perish** "Our Sin" *(Anko, 211 S. State College Blvd. Suite #312, Anaheim, CA 92806).* Emo-Metal? I accidentally hit the repeat button on the first track, listened to it twice, and I almost didn't notice. This is very similar to the Atreyu approach to music— heavy verses by the "vocalist," chorus singing done by other guy(s) in the band. If it wasn't for the vocalist, Perish would be just a Heavy Rock band; with him, they're "cutting edge," along with the rest of the bands like them. Template-assembled Rock that's similar to so many other musical acts. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Planet of 9** "Alienation" *(www.planetof9.com).* After a long, stressing day at work, I take solace in a bottle of beer and the gloomy, haunting musical phantasm of Planet of 9. Theirs is the stirring, blustery sound of an Arctic otherworld where harsh frigid winds are actually rather inspirational and soothing to the touch. At certain junctures, the songs take on an aggressive thick-skinned approach that gets the mosh blood boiling to a fever-pitched frenzy, but, overall, the structural sonic content reminds me of Tool due to the magnificently skilled and technically proficient manner in which it is delivered. And let me not forget to mention the morbidly dark Alice In Chains-style rhythmic excursions that provocatively slither their way into the mix, as well as the urban white-boy slick-smooth raps that maneuver across specific portions of the disc like sex and a tube of Astro Glide. Damn, I'm diggin' the hell out of Planet of 9! (CD)-**Moser**

**Poison Black** "Lust Stained Despair" *(Century Media, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* This is the first album from Poison Black after the final break up of Sentenced. Musically, this album sounds a lot like In Flames *Reroute to Remain*. Vocally, it sounds like a cross between Anders and Dave Mustaine from Megadeth. With the rising knowledge of the Scandinavian scene here in the States, this is the kind of album that could really make an impact. It has the hooks of In Flames and Soilwork (but not it's not as heavy), and also seems to have the atmosphere of a Children of Bodom. It would have been great to hear some of the heaviness from Sentenced incorporated here, but still this is a solid sophomore effort and the timing of this release couldn't be better. (CD)-**Myk**

**Public Enemy featuring Paris** "Rebirth of A Nation" *(Guerilla Funk, POB 2317, Danville, CA 94526).* At a time when Hip Hop has degenerated into thuggish party music with little or no music behind it, Public Enemy attacks with what is probably their best album since *Muse Sick-N-Hour Mess Age*. Collaborating with Paris, the guy who got into a lot of trouble for writing a song about assassinating the President when Bush I was in office, PE are at their militant best, addressing everything from Hurricane Katrina to music downloading to the War in Iraq while bringing the musical element back to the core of the songs. On "Rise" and "Pump the Music, Pump the Sound," Paris incorporates the squeaks and laid back saxophone grooves of *It Takes A Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* without resorting to pure nostalgia. Professor Griff, Dead Prez and even NWA's MC Ren make some brutal statements here as well. Don't give up on Public Enemy yet—they ain't done. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Pyramids** "Following the Tracks, Forcing Motions Through Phases" *(Slave Union, 1012 Raymond St., Schenectady, NY 12308).* One of these days I'll get a chance to thank the members of City of Caterpillar and Pg 99 for the innovative and subsequently inspiring marks they forever left on the face of Hardcore. In the wake of these bands' demises it seems as if young Hardcore bands have been eager to pick up the torch and run with it full speed ahead. Coincidentally, a young Philadelphia band called Pyramids continues to take Hardcore in new sonic directions with their debut, *Following the Tracks, Forcing Motions Through Phases*, which is a mature document of subdued introspective melodies and drones contrasting against a chaotic wall of epic proportions. The arrangements come off as movements more so than easily identifiable verse/chorus song structures, as each song segment ebbs and flows. There are digital delay-saturated guitar lines, bass riffs that can sound more like a guitar at times, frantic screams and driving percussion; it becomes absolutely hypnotizing when the louder, more chaotic moments begin to unfold. If you're a fan of City of Caterpillar, Pg 99 and even some of the more Post-Rock friendly bands like Envy or Mono, I highly recommend you check this out. (CD)-**Andriani**

**The Quiet Sickness** "Horror and Hope" *(707, 143 Bayview Dr., Mastic Beach, NY 11951).* When your nightmares have lost their edge, The Quiet Sickness is there to fuel your darkest fears. An Ennio-Morricone-on-Quaaludes guitar lead repeats over a thick, foggy bass drone, building into violent whip-cracks and epidermal scraping. That's just the first track—the second is more airy, but no less eerie. Repeating guitar lead and digital hum. The nightmares have become peaceful and Rapid Eye Movement is relaxing; and soon deep sleep develops. All is calm. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Raised Fist** "Sound of the Republic" *(Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026).* When the Burning Heart label finally made it over to the US, it was an eye-opening experience into Swedish Hardcore, much the same way Swedish Metal begged to be reacted to. Musically, the bands were taking it to another level and—gasp—they might actually be **better** than their American and European counterparts. Raised Fist was part of that initial assault, and they continue to this day. Now with new drummer, Matte Modin (Dark Funeral), the band has taken a step towards the heavier, but this still maintain that Umea sound. I always thought that Abinhandah was the best band to come out of that scene, followed closely by Breach and Raised Fist. They have approached the sound of the Swedish Metal scene a little more here, but it's not Metalcore; they just sound heavier, sort of like having a Metal band do a Bold cover or when Fear Factory did the Agnostic Front cover—same song, same structure, just heavier than the original. If you're still looking for a band to fill the void left by The Refused, Raised Fist is that band. This will also will appeal to fans of the Syracuse scene. (CD)**-Myk**

**Recourse** "Weakening the Structure" *(Skinlifter, www.skinlifterrecords.com).* Southern Metal brutality is at its harshest on this eight-song scorcher from Maryland. In a swirl of blast-beats, breakdowns, intricate riffage and odd-timing, Recourse go for the throat and don't give up until plenty of blood has been spilled. Comparisons are difficult because I'm not an extreme Metal aficionado, but I can tell you that this is the best Hardcore Metal album I've heard since killwhitneydead's *So Pretty, So Plastic*. It's the sound of an out-numbered army battalion fighting to the death in a take-no-prisoners battle— my kind of music. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

**Reducers SF** "Raise Your Hackles" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)*. Reducers SF are back with their latest batch of anthemic Pub Rock tunes ala Cocksparrer, The Clash and Dropkick Murphys. I've always had a soft spot for this band, mostly owing it to the fact that they're extremely nice guys and their tunes make me wanna drink 'til the sun comes up—and this album is no different. The band remains quite melodic on *Raise Your Hackles*, and any fan of their previous material should enjoy this immensely. There are hooks galore here and you'll be singing along in no time, trust me. (CD)**-McClernon**

**Reducers SF** "Raise Your Hackles" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)*. Leave it to a band like Reducers SF to consistently reinforce my faith in Punk Rock. *Raise Your Hackles* is their latest boot-stompin' sing-along fracas, and what a spirited, street-brawlin' affair it is! The husky, ale-grizzled vocals are matched note for note and pint for pint with a jaunty, fist-swinging plethora of blaring British pub guitar leads, rhythmically tumultuous bass contusions, and bare-knuckled window-smashing drumbeats. It's as if Punk has been pummeled into shape by a new generation of loutish alley-roaming hooligans in search of respectable civil institutions to vandalize and burn to the ground. Long live Reducers SF, and up yours! (CD)**-Moser**

**The Replacements** "Don't You Know Who I Think I Was? The Best of..." *(Rhino, 3400 W. Olive Ave., Burbank, CA 91505).* When I was first introduced to the Replacements by my ex-girlfriend's best friend in high school, I had never heard anything like *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash*. It really was the rare mix of true Punk and New Wave, and I was hooked. Of course, all great things come to an end, and as The Replacements became more popular and more "Alternative" as they went on, I lost the fervor for them and wasn't at all interested in a Paul Westerberg solo project. Looking back, I probably should have given them more of a chance on later offerings—much as with the later works of Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson, I realized that I was just too young to get what The Replacements were playing. I was all about the fast, loud and heavy, and the more melodic, deep music these bands were playing was just over my head. This new collection is the chance for you to become acquainted with the band's career all at once. It basically collects two tracks from every full-length the band released, plus one track from each EP, and then they added two new songs on top of that. The Replacements are genius song writers and Post-Punk icons with few rivals. This has helped me realize I need to go back and listen to this band seriously; it also has shown me that I wasn't entirely wrong, as I still think the two tracks from *Ma...* and the one track from *Stink* are the best of the 20 offered here. With much of the band's catalog deleted, this is a great place to start until the inevitable box set. (CD)**-Myk**

**Retching Red** "Scarlet Whore of War *(4096 Piedmont Ave. #216 Oakland, CA 94611-5221)*. Little has changed since the last Retching Red full-length, and that is a very good thing indeed. Scathing, socially conscious female-fronted DIY Hardcore/Punk is the formula with which this East Bay destructo-unit plow through their latest opus, with a nod to a variety of Bay Area greats. As before, fast paced bedlam commences, with vocalist Cinder Block's tremendous screeches, growls, and croons at the fore. Excellent song arrangements bridge the gap between grime-strewn Hardcore and catchier inclinations. The lyrics are articulate, insightful, and humorous as always, focusing on such topics as the folly of war, conformity, reproduction, and media manipulation. With all the generic mosh and pop bullshit infesting the scene, it's refreshing to hear a band playing no frills Punk with heart. Check this out. (CD)-**Ramek**

**Rise Against** "The Sufferer and the Witness" *(Geffen...Find It Yerself)*. You probably remember this Chicago band had two full-lengths on Fat Wreck a while back. Rise Against's fourth full-length (the second for Geffen) is fast, melodic Punk Rock that would fit right in with your favorite Fat and Epitaph CDs. There are shades of Bad Religion and The Offspring (though Rise Against gets more noisy and intense), backing vocals by ALL's Chad price, and a bristling-but-clean production by Bill Stevenson and Jason Livermore. Overall, *The Sufferer and the Witness* probably won't change the world, but the lyrics are good, the performances are tight and the songs are catchy as hell. Try it, you'll probably like it. (CD)**-Black**

**Rojo Diablo** "Devil Red" *(www.rojodiablo.com)*. The heavy hand of doom amplification parts the clouds above, and a flash of lightning gives birth to Rojo Diablo. They are the kindred spiritual sons of Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Nirvana, Alice In Chains, Soundgarden, and Monster Magnet, cast in iron and molded by the desert sands, it seems. *Devil Red* simmers, broils, and bubbles over with a melodic intensity and a sludgy, palatable rhythmic fury that rumbles mightily through the earth's inner core and moves mountains, alters the ocean's tide, and transforms our planetary landscape in the process. "Killing Theo," "American Gomorrah," "Fake," "Jerrado," "You Were Wrong," "Time Alone," and "The Hard One" are stand-out tracks that guide the listener into the thundering throes of intoxication and ecstasy. I pledge allegiance to Rojo Diablo, and, meanwhile, life around me roars. (CD)**-Moser**

**Rosematter** (www.myspace.com/rosematter). A little Hot Rod Circuit, a little Farside, a hint of Thursday, and Pop Punk influences with female lead vocals, sometimes sounding like a female-fronted Midtown. This CD could definitely turn into a sing-along in the car album. For a self-release, the recording quality is impressive, and there is a handful of studio effects that enhance the songs in the right places. The vocals aren't the absolute best, but coupled with strong songs, they push this disc into the pleasant side of my review pile this issue. (CD)**-KevTV**

**SS Kaliert** "Dsklation" *(Punk Core, POB 916, Middle Island, NY 11953)*. SS Kaliert are the German equivalent of The Casualties, possessing both a similar look and sound. But SS Kaliert are more abrasive, more chaotic, and considerably more menacing than their American counterparts. *Dsklation* is the band's full-length debut, and it's a sneering full-frontal blitzkrieg assault of Hardcore Street Punk with a distinct melodic edge. The lyrics savagely attack cops, fascism, racism, the media, politicians, drug addicts, conformists, and Punk posers while the music itself is a thunderous, blistering eruption of frenetic brute-force rage. Most of the songs are sung in SS Kaliert's native Germanic tongue, gruff, snarling, and spitting blood, it seems. There's a stormy riot brewing in the Fatherland... SS Kaliert at your service. (CD)-**Moser**

**SSM** *(Alive, POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)*. SSM are the initials of the last names of the three principal players in the band (Szymanski, Shettler, Morris). But I personally think it'd be a more appropriate abbreviation of Sonic Shattering Madness, because these 13 apocalyptic psycho-beat dirges and dizzying Garage Rock anthems wildly veer all over the musical globe, incorporating a bit of Syd Barrett, Swell Maps, The Pixies, and Butthole Surfers along the way. Late at night when the rest of the world is fast asleep, I'm gonna hear the SSM noise in my head and let the demons dance accordingly. Boo-ga-da boo-ga-da oh yeh! (CD)-**Moser**

**Scar Symmetry** "Pitch Black Progress" *(Nuclear Blast, 2323 West El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250)*. I usually dig Scandinavian Metal, but this CD ain't doing it for me; it's too clean, too slick and way too radio-friendly. Any song on this album would fit perfectly on the local Hard Rock/Metal station between System of A Down and Godsmack. All the songs have a similar structure, beginning with a cool Death Metal groove that quickly morphs into something that simultaneously reminds me of Queensryche, Boston and Staind. This one's got "mullet" written all over it. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**The Secret Machines** "Ten Silver Drops" *(Reprise, repriserecords.com)*. Since 2004, I had been eagerly awaiting the follow up to the Secret Machines' *Now Here Is Nowhere*, and when I finally saw it on the shelf in the record store, I bought it with the same excitement my cat has when I get home. Having completely eschewed the hipster arrogance of their first EP and the surrealist hippy psychedelia of *Now Here...*, this Brooklyn-via-Dallas trio has succeeded in producing a statement of personal depth, exploring feelings of alienation and withdrawal both internally and externally—and all just in time for my recent breakup with my ex-girlfriend to finally sink in. "All at Once" certainly ranks up there as one of the most bitter breakup songs ever written, centering on the immediate realization that "All at once it's not important." It's over. It sucks, but whatcha gonna do about it? Sit there "Alone, Jealous and Stoned" as the opening track states, listening to this album over and over again, raising my glass of cheap boxed wine to a great new album by a great band. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Set Your Goals** "Mutiny" *(Eulogy, www.eulogyrecordings.com)*. While I don't really understand the whole pirate motif that seems so popular these days, I certainly understand where Set Your Goals is coming from. The band plays Lifetime-influenced melodic Hardcore that I'm a total sucker for. *Mutiny* is extremely well-produced (perhaps too much so?), the two vocalists sound excellent (and complement each other nicely), and the band knows how to write a helluva catchy riff without sounding contrived or Dr. Dan-obsessed. For a recent comparison, try Crime In Stereo, though I think the Long Island natives are slightly better at this stuff. This is a worthwhile purchase. (CD)-**McClernon**

**Shadows Fall** "Fallout From the War" *(Century Media, 2323 W El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA, 90250)*. I really like Shadows Fall, and I don't hate the band for taking baby steps towards gaining a larger audience, but this album's worth of B-sides and covers is damn average. Most of these songs are clearly leftovers that weren't included/finished for *The War Within* because they don't pack enough energy to distinguish themselves from other Shadows Fall tunes. The covers highlight a couple of acts that deserve some more recognition for their contributions (namely Leeway). Yeah, most bands would kill to write these leftovers, but that still won't fully satiate a true Shadows Fall fan. This disc is for people that need everything a band does, and is not for casual fans looking to check out a band. I look forward to their next proper full-length, and can't hold this disc up as any indication as to what it will sound like. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Silent Civilian** *(Mediaskare, 19528 Ventura Blvd, Suite 249, Tarzana, CA 91356)*. Silent Civilian rises out of what I will venture to call the ashes of Spineshank. I think they still exist, but since Jonny's departure, I don't remember hearing anything from them. This is Jonny's new band, and the album is produced by Logan Mader of Soulfly/Machinehead fame. The record sounds like Spineshank meets Bleeding Through and In Flames. There is a much more melodic lead guitar and a good amount of clean vocals, but there's still that NuMetal song structure as a foundation. Jonny's vocals are decent enough; he has a fairly strong growl, but I actually prefer his clean vocals. I'm not sure whether it's Jonny or Tim playing these Swedish-style guitar riffs, but I have to hand it to whoever it is, because there's some really complicated stuff going on here. I won't say I'm floored by how original the band is—they remind me of too many other bands (both older and newer), but I **will** say that for a band containing a former member of Spineshank, they have far surpassed my expectations. Spineshank was brutally awful, Silent Civilian has the potential to do some really good heavy songs. I think fans of Avenge Sevenfold and people who really liked *Reroute to Remain* will find a lot of good things happening here. (CD)-**Myk**

**Sinking Ships** "Disconnecting" *(Revelation, POB 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232)*. Sinking Ships has a classic early '90's Hardcore sound. The music is fast and melodic, the vocals are yelled, and the gang backup vocals are awesome. Sinking Ships sort of reminds me of As Friends Rust. Check out this band from the Northwest. (CD)-**Mr.Noiz**

**Slayer** "Christ Illusion" *(American, 3300 Warner Blvd, Burbank, CA 91505)*. Slayer. No word says so much or so little all at once. I could leave that single word as a review for this record and not one person on this planet would question me as to what *Christ Illusion* sounds like. But, with the return of Dave Lombardo, how could I not gush about how fucking good this band is? Or how legendary they are, or even how much better they are as their original entity over other incarnations of the band? *Christ Illusion* is everything that Slayer fans want. I would say Metal fans, but if you claim to like Metal you love Slayer, so it's one in the same. New fan, old fan, it won't matter here. It has all the kick in the face of every album the band released with the original lineup. I will say this is better than *Seasons...* (I know people will argue with me, but that was my least favorite original lineup album) and it's at least on par with *South of Heaven* (old habits die hard, and I will need more listens to actually decide if it's possibly as good if not better than). *Christ Illusion* shreds *Diabolos*, and it's an amazing follow up to *God Saves Them All*. The landmark track in my mind is "Jihad;" the song has the odd intro thing going on and then bursts into trademark Slayer and absolutely destroys. The single, "Cult" is also a highlight of the album, which is unusual for singles. The album turns in at 38 minutes, and there's no moment that lacks. It doesn't need to be said, but if you buy one album this year, this is it. FUCKING SLAYER! (CD)-**Myk**

**The Sleeping** "Questions and Answers" *(Victory, 346 N. Justine, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607)*. The Sleeping's debut for Victory picks up where there fantastic first LP, *Believe What We Tell You,* left off. It's Post-Punk of the style that I normally find brutally annoying, but The Sleeping pull it off brilliantly, and on *Questions and Answers*, they take it to the next level. The songs are tighter, more complex, and no less infectious than their previous output. Sure they have breakdowns and those backing vocals that are screamed out for no apparent reason, but at least they seem somewhat appropriate and kept to a minimum. If *Believe What We Tell You* was the record that made The Sleeping a household name out here in Long Island, then *Questions and Answers* should make the band a household name throughout the country. (CD)-**McClernon**

**Snakes and Music** "Isabelle" *(Universal Warning, 865 Main Street, Royersford, PA 19468)*. Snakes and Music are the kind of band I would expect to find on Jade Tree around 1995. The band features two former members of the Jazz June and falls in line with bands like the Cap n' Jazz and Joan of Arc. The band falls somewhere between acoustic singer-songwriter and angst-ridden early '90's "Alternative." While I won't pretend that this was ever my scene, I'm confident that this will sit well with the remainder of the backpack kids and fans of Kill Rock Stars bands. (CD)-**Myk**

**So Unloved** "Pink, Black and Broken" *(SOS, POB 3017, Corona, CA 92878).* One of the better releases on SOS that's not a re-issue, *Pink, Black and Broken* is primitive, three-chord, female-fronted Punk Rawk! While there have been better bands playing the SoCal Street Punk style, both past and present, So Unloved have a certain charm and appeal about them, due mainly to their being a tad sloppy and unpolished; some may consider this a drawback, but I consider it a plus. Why, you ask? Simply put, what they lack in talent, they more than make up for in genuine heart and passion. *Pink, Black and Broken* won't change your life—hell, it might not even register as anything more than a blip on the radar of your drug-addled mind—but it's damn enjoyable nonetheless. (CD)-**McClernon**

**The Setup** "The Pretense of Normality" *(GSR, Spekstraat 44, 6223 BM, Maastricht. NL).* Europe has been releasing more and more of the most brutal Metalcore bands in the world; The Setup, from Belgium, is no different. The band is reminiscent of a three way cross between Hatebreed, Converge and *Fixation On A Co-Worker*-era Deadguy. The vocals are a little more high-pitched than I usually like, but as time passes, I think this guy's voice will become a bit deeper and more powerful. In a lot of ways, The Setup is what I think Most Precious Blood would sound like if Thom came back and did vocals full-time. They still have that Hardcore song structure, but a lot of Metal guitar riffs. As a debut full-length, this is strong. The band could use a little work, but I expect good things in the future. (CD)-**Myk**

**Sprawl** (*Effluvium, www.myspace.com/e845*). Imagine that four extra-terrestrials ventured into the backwoods of Virginia to perform some anal-probing on some rednecks, but instead got distracted by the sounds of Heavy Metal blaring from the hillbilly's speakers. These aliens are so inspired that they take up instruments of their own, get hooked on moonshine and start a band called Sprawl. Combining Melvins experimentalism with Southern Metalcore intricacies and the spacier moments of Hawkwind, these oddballs take Metal in an entirely different direction—one that's new, original and just plain strange. This EP showcases a band that has the potential to be a serious driving force in Underground Rock—forget the confines of Metal. I hope they last long enough to do it. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**The States** "Multiply Not Divide" *(The States, www.thestatesonline.com).* I'm immediately going to be intrigued by an NYC trio where two-thirds of the band are California natives (like myself), so here goes. Yes, the States are doing the Post-Punk/New Wave/Indie thing, but they do it with a certain amount of what's lacking in your typical flavor-of-the-month Alternative band—namely, BALLS. Like Muse without the Radiohead references, the music is driven by the pounding rhythm section of drummer Joe Stroll and bassist Previn Warren, who replicate the sway of the ocean in their beats. Guitarist/vocalist Chris Snyder sails over these unpredictable waters with the confidence of a fisherman who has been lost at sea for 20 years and has no plans to return to the mainland. All metaphors aside, the bottom line is good song writing, which takes talent—both of which are evident on this highly personal statement of emotionally-charged electricity. The future holds hope after all. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**The Stitches** "8 X 12" *(Vinyl Dog, 8941 Atlanta Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* The Stitches should've been the biggest thing since the Sex Pistols if they actually gave a fuck for more than two seconds. *8X12* is the record that once again garnered people's interest in pure Punk Rock when it was initially released in 1995. Even listening to it now, one can sense the anger and element of danger inherit in the band's venomous lyrics and brutal guitar attack. To really appreciate these California lads, one really needs to see them live and witness the carnage and broken bottles for themselves. Sloppy and flawed? Maybe. Genius? No question. A modern day classic! (CD)-**McClernon**

**The Stitches** "8 x 12"" *(Vinyl Dog, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* Originally released in 1995 as a vinyl-only product, this is the first time *8 x 12"* has seen the blinding light of day as a CD. So count your boozy blessings and thank the high priests at Vinyl Dog/TKO Records, because this is one of the best damn Snot Punk recordings of our time. It's eight songs of pure reckless abandon cranked out in a dizzying blur of alcohol, angst, amplification, and anarchic strut-fuck energy. A wildly ranting rush of slurred, junkie-brat vocals is slammed head-on by a blitzkrieg bomb blast of atomic-frenzied instrumentation. And then after the smoke clears, The Stitches stand tall and sneering, poised and ready to go another round. (CD)-**Moser**

**Stolen Marches** *(Stolen Marches, 1159 North Topaz Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84116).* Stolen Marches is a poppy Street Punk style band from Utah. They have the tone of a band like Rancid, but structurally, they have songs that sound like they should be on TKO. While I won't profess that these guys are blindingly original, they are good. Fans of bands like Operation Ivy, Adolescents, NOFX and the like will find a quality new band here. I wouldn't at all be surprised to find these guys on a future volume of *Give 'Em the Boot* or similar high profile Punk comps. (CD)-**Myk**

**Strapping Young Lad** "The New Black" *(Century Media, 2323 W El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250).* That zany Devin Townsend, always up to something. The first thing that hits me on the opening track "Decimator" is Townsend singing, a vocal feature that was pretty absent from their last album, *Alien,* which Townsend declared SYL's attempt at being as heavy as possible. I love his voice when he sings, and it's a bonus to hear it incorporated into SYL this go around. Gene Hoglan is a monster drum player, and his masterful percussion is all over this disc. Listen to "U Suck" and "Wrong Side" and try not to punch your stereo—Hoglan is **that** good. Even though *Alien* featured collaboration on the music, it's on *The New Black* that the band really gels as a cohesive unit, allowing its members to accentuate their own strengths. There are a couple of tracks that are a tad weak, but even weak SYL is still pretty damn good. Townsend continues to produce a multitude and variety of releases that deliver what has become synonymous with his name—extraordinary quality. In a modern music scene where most artists play one style and release albums every couple of years, Townsend defies these wussies and cranks out daring, experimental, and top-notch music. He just doesn't care what you (or I) think, and it's that approach that will always yield more important music. (CD)-**KevTV**

**The Switch-Ups** *(Reality Clash, POB 491, Dana Point, CA 92629).* Hey! It's the nicest, most polite Punk band ever to record an album! You could play this CD for your grandmother and she would probably love it, as it's full of sweet little Pop ditties about girls, girls and silly teenage macho bravado. Now isn't that special? (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Terror** "Always the Hard Way" *(Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724).* Terror are back, and rest assured they still sound a whole lot like...well, Terror. The band has become something of an institution in recent years, for better or worse, offering inordinately burly, mosh-friendly Hardcore to the masses. An endless onslaught of carbon copy "tough" drivel has surfaced in the band's wake, lacking the slick production and considerable chops that Terror possess. To their credit, the band has maintained more of a reverence for fast paced, straight forward NYHC-tinged Hardcore than, say, every Hatebreed clone out there, though they are no less "hard." With each subsequent Terror release, the production has gotten slicker, however, and the music has succumbed a bit more to the lure of mid-paced Metalcore chug. "*Always the Hard Way,*" Terror's latest, follows this trend, though it is largely comprised of fierce, fast-paced Hardcore with nods to the Cro-Mags and mid-era

Madball. Simply put: if you've enjoyed what this band has done thus far, you'll like this. If not, steer clear. (CD)-**Ramek**

**Terrorizer** "Darker Days Ahead" *(Century Media, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* A new Terrorizer album after 17 years is the kind of record you hate to review. You want it to be amazing. You want it to be legendary. Mostly, you hope it doesn't suck and tarnish the reputation the band built up off their single legendary release. If you tank it, you will always wonder if you missed something or if people will hunt you down. So here it is, the new Terrorizer album, and it's fine. Yes, just fine. It isn't *World Downfall*, but it isn't bad. It's a good Grind album, but after all that time, it doesn't live up to the groundbreaking revolution that the band once created. To begin with, this isn't the complete original band, so on those grounds alone you can't compare it. For a band like this, bare minimum it has to be the original lineup or that alone accounts for any shortcomings. Also, after this much time, others bands have pioneered in the genre, so much of the edge the band once had has been usurped by others. So thus, this is a really good album, and fans of early Grind will not at all be disappointed with the songs or the attack of the album, but few out there—if any—will feel the earth-shattering effects that *World Downfall* branded into our psyches. In comparison though, this is a much better offering than either the new Celtic Frost or the new Venom, by leaps and bounds. (CD)-**Myk**

**Terrorizer** "Darker Days Ahead" *(Century Media, 2323 W El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250).* In 1989, Terrorizer released *World Downfall*, and the band broke up soon after, with members going back to/forming Death Metal bands like Nausea, Napalm Death, and Morbid Angel. Also, in 1989, I won the math bee—I fucking rocked math. Back to Terrorizer... They've now returned with a new vocalist, unleashing a Grind/Death Metal CD that has enough bite to keep a listener interested. The guitars are a little too muddy and the drums give off a programmed tone (though they are certainly played by Pete Sandoval), yet the songs don't get lost in a wall of noise. Instead of playing against one another in an attempt to be individually loud, Terrorizer's members actually perform with one another, making it a team effort to be loud and brutal—this trait is unfortunately not followed by a lot of extreme Metal bands. Terrorizer's assault may not sound perfect in terms of recording quality, but its skillfully played by veterans of the scene. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Thank God** "For Pregnant Virgins" *(Tick Tock, 1721 Ashley Hall Rd. Apt. 3U, Charleston, SC 29407).* Now all the Screamo bands wanna be the Locust eight years after the fact. Yawn... (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Think About Life** *(Alien 8, POB 666, Station R Montreal, Quebec, H2S 3L1, Canada).* Loaded with danceable synth-driven melodies and metronomic percussion, Think About Life is hipster fodder at its finest. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing, as just about every track on this self-titled effort is very infectious without sacrificing its artistic vision for the clichéd Gang of Four rips that seem to be commonplace these days. The vocals remind me a lot of Richard Baluyut of Indie Rock legends Versus so much that Think About Life could that aforementioned band if Versus opted to use keyboards as opposed to guitars. In this age where more electronic sounds are being manipulated to resemble more schizo-styled No Wave, it's nice to hear a band use those elements to create Pop music that moves your ass. (CD)-**Andriani**

**This Is Hell** "Sundowning" *(Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724).* One of the biggest and brightest of the current Hardcore scene, Long Island's This Is Hell is everything right about the genre. Featuring members of Scraps and Heart Attacks and The Backup Plan, I had no doubt this record would be good, but even I'm a little surprised by just how good *Sundowning* really is. While I'm a little disappointed that Jeff Tiu's (Backup Plan) lead vocals aren't displayed here, Travis Reilly has gotten even better since his days in Scraps and I couldn't be happier with the end result. While This Is Hell shares similar styles musically with both Scraps and Heart Attacks and Backup Plan, there's no question that they are harder, faster, and angrier than ever before. There's still melody to be sure, but it's much subtler, though it certainly doesn't take away from the songs' catchiness or the tendency of the listener to stand up and start singing along while pumping a fist in the air. (CD)-**McClernon**

**Thor** "Devastation of Musculation" *(Smog Veil, 1658 N. Milwaukee #284, Chicago, IL 60647).* An ominously tolling bell signals the thundering return of the mighty super-human Thor on the kick-off track, "Lords of Steel." *Devastation of Musculation* harkens back to the classic Metal sound from days of yore when wizards and hobbits and mythological reptilian creatures roamed a haze-enshrouded otherworldly landscape. Thor bellows and growls like an enraged, fire-spewing dragon while a blazing meteor shower of brick-crushing Norse riffs, blustery volcanic leads, and massive god-stomp rhythms rattle and roar as if enmeshed in a medieval battle between demons and knights. Nocturnal beasts, Nordic spirits, wolves, and warriors lyrically complement the music, making *Devastation of Musculation* one hell of a sonically riveting journey. As long as there's Thor, the true essence of Metal cannot die! (CD)-**Moser**

**Time Again** "The Stories Are True" *(Hellcat, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026).* Time Again frontman Daniel Dart makes absolutely no effort to find a vocal style of his own and is quite arguably the worst Tim Armstrong impersonator ever. I know that imitation is flattery but this is completely fuckin' ridiculous. When I say that Dart sounds exactly like Tim, I don't mean that his vocals possess similar qualities—I mean he's a carbon copy, he's a clone, and a faux Armstrong at that. What's worse is that Tim lends his vocals to the *Time Again* title track, and I couldn't distinguish between the two vocalists. Having one Tim is fine, but I personally don't need another one. As far as the instrumental aspect of the record is concerned, I really enjoyed it—it's simple, bold and incredibly energetic. But, in all honesty, I can't stop scratching my head after having listened to this. (CD)-**Manic**

**Towers of Rome** "World War I" *(Hewhocorrupts, Inc., POB 4450, Chicago, IL 60680-4450).* While *World War I* is not pushing the Grind envelope into regions uncharted, aficionados of the genre will be pleased with the warp speed shredding and blast-beat driven percussion that Towers of Rome bring to the table. For the uninitiated, this Illinois outfit experiment with traditional Grind fare, adding an array of wild tempo shifts and abstract passages. At center stage is their raging drum work, which strays from the over-produced mechanized click-gloss found on many a modern Grind record . It would be tough to liken what is achieved here to the ingenuity and brutality of the early Earache camp, but for Grind enthusiasts this release is worth a listen. (CD)-**Ramek**

**Toxic Narcotic** "21st Century Discography" *(Rodent Popsicle, POB 1143, Allston, MA 02134).* The CD contains 23 tracks from Toxic Narcotic, the Boston mainstay. This is apparently limited to 2000 copies and contains re-recorded versions of tracks from several releases. There are no liner notes, just song titles, so it's sort of hard to say anything about this release. Toxic Narcotic has vastly improved over the last five years or so—the recording is good, and the vocals are really strong. The songs are crusty Hardcore Punk pieces that will remind you of an American version of bands like Broken Bones. These tracks are raw, fast and mean and the CD is self-released, so the band is still sticking to its guns. (CD)-**Myk**

**Transition** "Get There" *(Floodgate/East West, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, 24th Floor, New York, NY 10104).* "Produced by Mike Herrera of MXPX." That's all you had to say. Thanks for the warning. My wimp factor's not in full bloom today. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Trashies** "Life Sucks Trash Fuck" *(Mortville, POB 4263, Austin, TX 78765).* Yippee! I'm drunk and giddy and I have the Trashies to keep me company! These four Seattle scumfucks do Trash Punk the right way—drunk and shitty, yet inexcusably danceable to the point where I'd do a strip tease for my cat if I were actually wearing any clothes. It's all somehow a culture-clash of keyboard-driven Murder City Devils inbred with GG Allin attitude/production/honesty and when a new band reminds me of two of my favorite bands, I'm happy. "Science Suks," "Sweatpants Boner," "Discount Meat"—I thought it couldn't get any better until I heard the tribute to GG, "IH8UMOTHERFUCKERS." Believe me, this is the SHIT. Literally. **(CD)-chuck.foster**

**Trophy Scars** "Alphabet Alphabets" *(The Death Scene, 8642 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11214).* Trophy Scars play upbeat, occasionally discordant Indie Rock with scattered forays into heavier territory that recalls Northwestern veterans Modest Mouse and a slew of other acts, as well (the overrated Wolf Parade comes to mind intermittently). This band sustains more of a Punk undercurrent than the above-mentioned outfits, however. Solid arrangements and catchy yet abrasive musicianship makes for one of the more solid indie records I've heard of late. What makes *Alphabet Alphabets* noteworthy is the variety of musical arrangements therein, which span emphatic rockers, jangle pop number, and angular, rhythmic freakouts. The occasional Hessian lick adds a bit of aggression to the jumpy din, as well. (CD)-**Ramek**

**V/A** "Anti-Disco League Vol. 1" *(Templecombe, POB 602, Bayside, NY 11706).* If ya fancy a few pints of stout with your boot-boy pals down at the pub on any given night of the week, may I suggest you give this 16-song Oi! compilation a hearty gander or two? It's sure to bring out the robust working-class pride in your bones while making your feet shuffle and stomp a lively jig in the process. Retaliator, The Templars, Crashed Out, Des Kontrol, Southpaw Manners, On-File, Pissed On Arrival, Deadline, and APA are just some of the thugs, hooligans, and rogues stirring up a ruckus and snarling up a storm on *Anti-Disco League Vol. 1*. There's more Oi! per pint here than anywhere else on God's green earth, and that's the sweet honest truth, your honor! (CD)-**Moser**

**V/A** "By the Bands For the Fans: Nashville Underground, Vol. 1" *(Dee Minus, POB 101074, Nashville, TN 37224).* Straight from the gutters, jails, garages, and watering holes of Nashville town come 12 bands that sound like they were born with guitars in hand, a heart full of bad attitude, and the devil firmly entrenched in their souls. The musical content of this raucous, skull-splitting compilation is an explicitly loud conglomeration of trashed-out Rock n' Roll belligerence, snot-spittin' Punk Rock fury, twitchy spastic Garage Rock madness, melodically powerful Alternative Rock grandeur, and even a couple of twangy whiskey-drenched Country-Tonk brawlers. The Alcohol Stunt Band, Cretin Grims, The Rock n' Roll Hooligans, The Vindicates, The Creeping Cruds, Pig Dog, Dharmakaya, The Egg Rollers, The Umbilical Chords, Thee Redliners, Gabe Zander, and The Cripple Beaters step up to the mic and enthusiastically deliver two songs apiece before last call and the long haul to perdition. (CD)-**Moser**

**V/A** "Dolemite: The Soundtrack" *(Relapse, POB 2060, Upper Darby, PA 19082).* I think the best part of this CD is the fact that Relapse released it. This is the original soundtrack to the Rudy Ray Moore film and features the 14 tracks from the vinyl release plus seven bonus tracks including radio ads for the film. There's just something special about the whole Blacksploitation era of filmmaking, and this is one of the biggest films from that scene. The CD features extended liner notes and some of the best '70's Funk you'll find anywhere. I have to admit that some of my favorite '70's songs come from movies, so I'm always a sucker for this stuff, and the fact that you hear the album crackles on this is priceless. This was a whole different type of lost underground scene than today, and this is a way to appreciate that. Without stuff like this, we wouldn't have movies and soundtracks like *Pulp Fiction*. (CD)-**Myk**

**V/A** "Full Breach Kicks CD Sampler #1" *(www.fullbreach77.com).* The bulk of the bands strutting their trashy sonic stuff on this 22-track compilation sound like junked-out alley-roamin' Rock n' Roll dregs rummaging through the garbage cans of NYC's Bowery district lookin' for a kiss and a quick fix. Indeed, it seems as if all of these songs are a reckless, spirited, and inspired homage to booze, pills, sleazy sex, switchblade fights, dirty living, the New York Dolls, Dead Boys, Johnny Thunders, and ultimately the loud empowering swagger of Rock n' Roll itself. The Street Brats, The Soda Pop Kids, The Joneses, Dimestore Haloes, Urgencies, Kevin K, The Black Beauties, and more come stormin' out of the speakers with a two-fisted, dagger-slashed flurry of Junkie Punk, Glam Punk, and Street Punk. *Full Breach Kicks CD Sampler #1* is only available as a freebie when purchasing a t-shirt from Full Breach 77 (I got mine after mail-ordering a D-Generation tee and a Johnny Thunder and The Heartbreakers shirt). Trust me, though, it's a raucously splendid deal all the way around! (CD)-**Moser**

**V/A** "Triad: Red Sparowes / Made Out of Babies / Battle of Mice" *(Neurot, POB 410209, San Francisco, CA 94141).* This is the first in a series of releases from Neurot that will either be a CDEP or a 7" series. This disc features two tracks each from Red Sparowes, Made Out of Babies and Battle of Mice. Battle of Mice is a new band features a member of Red Sparowes (Josh Graham, also of Neurosis) and Julie Christmas of Made Our of Babies. Here's the thing: Red Sparowes is the best band on here. The whole Neurosis/Neurot Records aesthetic is here. Pounding bass parts and precise drumming combine to make an atmospherically heavy composition like Neurosis or Mouth of the Architect. But, Made out of Babies is horrible—Julie's vocals are these annoying Brooklyn hipster screeches that makes the band unlistenable. I don't like these tracks, and I hated their full-length. Musically, it's on par with Red Sparowes, but it is like have nails on a chalkboard singing. So, when Battle of Mice records songs that are amazing pieces with depth and thought and you add one of the worst vocalists I've ever heard, you once again have terrible tracks. Two of the six tracks on here are excellent, but I defy anyone to give me a good reason why this woman should ever be given a microphone again and continue to be allowed to ruin otherwise great compositions. (CD)-**Myk**

**V/A Hank III / Antiseen** *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* The A-side of this sizzlin' 7" slice of sonic bacon fat is a twangy, country-fried cover of Antiseen's "Ruby, Get Back to the Hills" as performed by none other than Hank III (the wild-eyed, devil-dog grandson of Hank Williams!). Of course, it's a mean, whiskey-sloshed Podunk ditty with demon hayseed vocals, a slithering swamp-moss slide guitar, and plenty of bone-cracking, jug-swigging rattlesnake rhythms. On the B-side, Antiseen put the pedal to the metal and roar forth with a truck-drivin', road-stompin' romp called "FTK" (an abbreviation of "Fuck the Kids"). As can be expected from an admirably infamous band of Antiseen's caliber, it's a brutal bone-crushing audio bloodbath guaranteed to kick the utter shit out of everything that crosses its path. With Hank III and Antiseen leading the charge, the South's gonna rise again for sure! (7")-**Moser**

**V/A Thirty3 / Los Dryheavers** *(Koi, 18600 South Parkview #1836, Houston, TX 77084).* This is exactly what I like to see in a great split record. Besides the incredible packaging that Koi has become known for, what's so appealing about this is that the two bands here sound virtually nothing like each other, but are equally stellar at their respective craft. Thirty3 play some ear-piercing melodic Hardcore/Post-Punk that sounds nothing like so many of the bands that are lumped into a similar category. They are more intricate, more passionate and chock full of energy to keep things interesting through the entirety of their four songs. For whatever reason, they remind me a bit of Panthro UK United and other late '90's No Idea acts. On the flipside we have Los Dryheavers, who plays balls to the wall Rock n' Roll, and quite well to boot. The only downside is they only have one track present here, but for fans of The Candy Snatchers and the Dwarves, it might be enough. (7")-**McClernon**

**Vader** "Sothis" *(Metal Mind/Music Video Distributors, POB 280, Oaks, PA 19456)*. So MVD got the rights to distribute all the Metal Mind label CDs here in the US. You know what that means? It means sick fucking Polish Metal coming to the States, much of which was never released or has been out of print for years. Case in point: Vader's *Sothis* album. *Sothis* was released in 1994 and contains seven blistering Vader Metal tracks. It was released by the now defunct Repulse label, and hasn't been available here for years. They have reproduced the artwork exactly and the CD sounds great. I don't know if it was remastered, but it sounds crisp. Vader has always been at the forefront of their scene, and you can really hear what it was they contributed. This is years before bands like Decapitated and Yattering, yet Vader doesn't sound any different than they do now—they're heavy and punishing, and rely on atmosphere to bring their songs up to the next level. This early lineup was so damn good it's unbelievable to this day. This is a real gem that you'll now be able to acquire easily. You can really hear the early Death influences in the vocals as well. (CD)-**Myk**

**Vanden Plus** "Christo" *(Inside Out, 1601 Banksville Rd 2nd Fl, Pittsburgh, PA 15216)*. Orchestral, over-the-top Euro-Rock, often sounding like a slowed down Children of Bodom with sung lyrics. The overdone, epic feel is a bit much for me. Fans of the more self-indulgent side of Rock bands might dig this, but I'm left feeling like I am starring in some weird sword-wielding epic movie. (CD)-**KevTV**

**Voi Vod** "Katorz" *(The End, 331 Rio Grande #58, Salt Lake City, UT 84101)*. Voi Vod may go on, but this will be the last album with founding member Piggy due to his untimely death. The recording was actually never finished, but his guitar riffs were taken from his computer where he saved practice demos of himself playing the songs. It is a testament to Piggy, the band and his family that they could put this together. *Katorz* is the best Voi Vod album with Snake on vocals since *Dimension Hatross*. I don'1t know that this is better than *Negatron*, but since E-Force was singing for them then, I will exclude those two albums. Newstead has really settled in and gotten the Voi Vod groove after some really shitty Metallica albums and a lukewarm self-titled debut with Voi Vod. *Katorz* is every bit the "Tech-Metal" that Voi Vod originally set out to create, and the sound quality is beyond belief. I expected some glitches or soft spots, but there are none to be found. All fans of classic Thrash style and Voi Vod need to get this. Fans of bands like Isis and Neurosis should really treasure this as well, as you can really hear where a lot of those bands' influences came from on *Katorz*. RIP Piggy. (CD)-**Myk**

**Voxtrot** "Mothers, Sisters, Daughters and Wives" *(Cult Hero, www.voxtrot.net)*. I listened to the first song and immediately thought of Morrissey. Then the second song came on and I heard the Love influence as alluded to in the press release. Still, Voxtrot's EP is just another jingle-jangle New York Brit-Pop wannabe who's standing in line for a boat that left the dock 10 years ago. And the boat sank. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Walking Bicycles** "Disconnected" *(www.highwheelrecordsllc.com)*. *Disconnected* almost defies description due to its aurally vibrant uniqueness, but since it is my sworn verbose duty to adequately describe the joyous sounds hypnotically emanating from within, I shall now do so with the utmost of gleeful zeal. Jocelyn Summers' angelic, dreamy, narcotic-laced vocals are intoxicatingly complemented by Julius Moriarty's choppy, swirling, staccato guitar propulsions. And Jason Leather's rolling, billowing bass lines mesh with the thudding, factory-stomp drumbeats of Cris Castallan. The dazzling, effervescent combination of each of the aforementioned elements makes for one hell of an atmospheric, urgently delivered Post-Punk sojourn into the past, present, future, and beyond. Indeed, the songs of Walking Bicycles are mesmerizing, redemptive, and inspiring...as all music should be. (CD)-**Moser**

**The Walkmen** "A Hundred Miles Off" *(Record Collection, 1223 Wilshire Blvd., #811, Santa Monica, CA 90403)*. *Bows and Arrows* was my absolute #1 favorite album of 2004, and since then I've been wondering where the hell the Walkmen were. Finally, they're in my stereo—all glorious syncopation, heavily reverbed guitar, droning keyboard, thumping bass and gin-soaked emotionally cursed vocals. Oddly enough, where my other fave contemporaries, The Secret Machines, have become noticeably more bitter, The Walkmen have lost a large portion of their negative edge. But what they now lack in negativity is made up for double-time by an absolute passionate love for the music they are creating. This musical happiness (if you will) makes for some extraordinary exploration, from the explosive Creole horns in the opener, "Louisiana," to the Hardcore Punk of "Tenley-Town" to the pulsing African rhythms of "Brandy Alexander." Don't get me wrong—there are definitely some classic Walkmen sounds on here, just through more experienced, smirking, cynical eyes. The Walkmen are a Punk band, first and foremost, but you have to understand what Punk means to understand the Walkmen. It's a conundrum that few can master. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

**Walls of Jericho** "With Devils Amongst Us All" *(Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724)*. This album was a little overdue, or at least it seemed that way. It feels like the last album came out an eternity ago, but *With Devils...* it was well worth the wait. Candace's vocals have yet evolved once more, capturing that style that was so prevalent in the post *Those Who Fear Tomorrow* world. Far from the Hatebreed sound, which it seems everyone is ripping off these days, the vocals on this album harken back to the earliest days of "Metalcore." Musically the band has just picked up where they left off, but with the addition of new drummer Dustin, formerly of Premonitions of War. Mike's guitars have that cutting sound you expect from Walls of Jericho, and the breakdowns are as fierce as ever. There are a few moments here where the songs get a little repetitive (the song "Plastic" is especially guilty of this), but that aside, Walls of Jericho is still a powerhouse of the modern Hardcore scene, and this album only stands to make them bigger. (CD)-**Myk**

**Wally Nichols** "Sharpie" *(www.wallynichols.com)*. Wally Nichols's PR parasites cite the Beatles, Beck, James Taylor and the Clash as the said performer's influences. Now I don't mean any disrespect, but had Joe Strummer not died so suddenly he more than likely would've blown his fuckin' head off after discovering that this douchebag embraces him and The Clash as a musical influence. Check out these insanely horrible lyrics from old Wally's song "Gimme A Women": "Gimme a woman with mud on her face/ mud in her boots/ mud in her grace/ gimme a women who eats like a pig/ farts in bed and lifts the lid..." Bravo Mr. Nichols. I hope that Wally reads this review, because what I'm saying is exactly what everyone else is thinking. The bottom line: Wally Nichols's musical career should be aborted like an unwanted teen pregnancy. (CD)-**Manic**

**The Warning** "All Systems Dead" *(Punk Core, POB 916, Middle Island, NY 11953)*. Old school Punk Rock meets Motorhead. Three chords with some ripping solos and pissed-off vocals make *All Systems Dead* a keeper. The Warning are akin to the Kill Your Idols style of Hardcore Punk, ignoring the trappings of current "punk." Fury focused into 12 tracks. Well done, lads! (CD)-**KevTV**

**The Wayward** *(Black Box, POB 110-454 Williamsburg Station, Brooklyn, NY 11211)*. Sweet Jesus! **Yes!** Say hello to my stereo's new friend, The Wayward. This raucous trio plays noisy, filthy, riff-happy garagy Indie Rock, with an emphasis on ROCK. Sounding a bit like some of my personal favorites from the Pacific North West region such as Karp or Big Business, with the guitar fuzz and vocal snarl of Mudhoney, this self-titled effort rocks one's face off. I can't wait to hear more. (CD)**-Andriani**

**When Tigers Fight** "Ghost Story" *(Indecision, POB 6052, Garden Grove, CA 92856).* A surprise from When Tigers Fight, who have largely eschewed the Rock-tinged blaze of their earlier EP for a more mid-paced outing on their first full-length, *Ghost Story*. The straight-forward Hardcore riffs remain intact, but are slowed to a sluggish, occasionally Metal-tinged crunch, while new vocalist Mike McTernan provides a harsh and evocative bout of howls and growls. The hook-laden guitar melodies and groove-oriented rhythms scattered throughout propel this record along at a good pace, and the lyrics are decent enough, straying from overt dogmatism. This is one of the more interesting hardcore records I've heard recently. A noteworthy follow up. (CD)**-Ramek**

**Wolfmother** *(Interscope, Look It Up Yourself).* These three Aussies must own a DeLorean that was re-tooled by Dr. Emmit Brown to allow them to bring back sound and style from 1975. Their sound is a blatant rip of Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, and Deep Purple, but this CD is just a cheesy party all the way through. Dopey lyrics sure, but they are coupled with a sound and style that begs to be played loud. Before you think that this band will have the same impact Andrew WK had, check out some of the songs before writing them off as pure gimmick. Sure, it's a lot of gimmick, but the music is undeniably awesome. After hearing a song on *Opie and Anthony*, I had to check it out. Glad I did. (CD)**-KevTV**

**The World/Inferno Friendship Society** "Red-Eyed Soul" *(Chunksaah, POB 977, Asbury Park, NJ 07712).* I feel like these guys have been around forever, but it's probably more like close to 10 years. The World/Inferno Friendship Society are one of the most original and unique bands around. Featuring Pete from Sticks & Stones fame, World/Inferno is nothing like the former band at all. In total there are nine members, including two drums, four horns and two guitars, making up the only Punk Rock orchestra that I'm aware of. To be sure, these NYC area cats have the spirit and sound of Punk Rock flowing through their veins, but there's so much more to this band and this record than three chords and an attitude. Trust me, there's nothing like this anywhere else, and probably very few things as good. (CD)**-McClernon**

**XXX Maniak** "Harvesting the Cunt Nectar" *(Selfmadegod, POB 46, 215002 Biala Podl., Poland).* Selfmadegod never ceases to amaze in the world of Grind—they have the sickest bands, without question. This is a re-issue that features guest appearances by members of Agoraphobic Nosebleed, Vile and Divine Rapture, among others, includes a bonus track, and is produced by Scott Hull. The band consists of two members, a vocalist and a bass/guitar/sampler. This Pennsylvania outfit raise all kinds of Hell, and produce samples like Mortician and Killwhitneydead. If you're into bands like Regurgitation, you may have a winner here. (CD)**-Myk**

**Yattering** "Live Extermination" *(Metal Mind/Music Video Distributors, POB 280, Oaks, PA 19456).* Available for the first time in the US, this is the audio from the band's *Chao* live DVD that was released a few years ago. There are no extra songs, but it features a beefed up book with all the lyrics and info on the show and production. The sound is really crisp, and I'm sure that I'll listen to the CD more often than watch the DVD. Yattering remains one of my favorite bands from Poland, and this is a showing of how purely brutal and technical this band really is. This also features some stunning new artwork from the DVD release. This is a perfect companion to all the Vader releases, new and re-issued, that are coming out this year. If you're a Vader or Decapitated fan, you need to hear this band. (CD)**-Myk**

**Yip Yip** "In the Reptile House" *(Strictly Amateur Films, www.safrecords.com).* Florida based Yip Yip plays pretty cool electronic Art Punk that's a cross between Kraftwerk, Kid 606 and Genghis Tron without the screaming and guitars. *In the Reptile House* is full of all sorts of electronic trickery and skronk without losing a playful appeal that will have people moving as well as intrigued by the barrage of blips and bleeps that take the place of any standard Rock instrument. It also seems as if Yip Yip takes from The Locust school of thought in regards to the visual presentation of their band, in not only the live forum with various homemade costumes, but the album's offbeat interior artwork which matches the zaniness of the sound itself. Another solid release from Strictly Amateur Films, who seem to continually push the envelope with their genre-bending releases. (CD)**-Andriani**

**Your Eyes My Dreams** *(Indianola, 815 Gornto Rd., Valdosta, GA 31602).* As I Lay Dying-like Metalcore. Some stock breakdowns, juxtaposed with the faster moments that propel each track towards the finish line. Each song has a strikingly similar structure, giving the disc a repetitive, monotonous feel. (CD)**-KevTV**

**Yyrkoon** "Unhealthy Opera" *(Osmose/The End, 331 Rio Grande #58, Salt Lake City, UT 84101).* It's still rare that I find a band from France that I like, in any style of music. It isn't a prejudice; I think it's just the bands I have been exposed to. One band that now has kicked my ass twice is Yyrkoon. They have some of the most devastating Death Metal riffs you will hear anywhere. Their songs are thunderous, but maintain a groove that's uncommon this style of music. They are part Morbid Angel, part Skinless, part Voi Vod, and part classic Metal (solos mostly). Yyrkoon is to Death Metal sort of what Black Label Society has become to dirty Rock n' Roll—they have put a spin all their own on the style. The band has in no way hit a sophomore slump, and has proven to be one of the most dynamic bands in the scene at the moment. Fans of Soilent Green and other melodically inclined heavy bands should seek this out. (CD)**-Myk**

**Zao** "The Fear Is What Keeps Us Here" *(Ferret, 258 Livingston Ave., NJ 08901).* Long upheld as the ringleaders behind the influx of Christian Hardcore bands within the last few years, Zao has surprised the hell out of me by unleashing a genuinely ferocious album with *The Fear Is What Keeps Us Here.* While yes, there's still a Metalcore element, there's also some insane, bottom-heavy, almost apocalyptic-sounding Hardcore that makes it seem like that Zao got their hands on some Neurosis albums. The album was engineered by Steve Albini, so maybe that's why it seems to have a much darker tone than previous efforts. By no means are we witnessing Hardcore being turned on its head, but it's clear that Zao have mastered their style here. Maybe it's just me, but I love when Hardcore bands place the vocals low in the mix. (CD)**-Andriani**

**Zenith Fuzzbomb** *(www.zenithfuzzbomb.com).* Zenith Fuzzbomb are undoubtedly on a zealous mission to spread the spirit-rousing gospel of Rock n' Roll to Heaven above, Hell below, and every solid inch of space in between. The five trip-wired songs on this here shamelessly blistering CD are pure frenetically dazzling spurts of unrivaled musical adrenaline and simmering rhythmic fury, electrified and amplified to maximum deafening perfection. The first couple of tunes are trashed, dirty-dealin', balls-out Turbo Rock bone-rattlers. The third number is a hopped-up, melodiously frenzied blast of sprightly Punk euphoria (an energetically pleasant twist with female vocals). The final two cacophonously glorious compositions surge forth in a gloomy, ominous wave of Sludge Rock surliness. And then the mighty oceans of the earth parted and coughed up a biblical sonic storm, and its name was Zenith Fuzzbomb, and all of creation furiously rocked evermore after. (CD)**-Moser**

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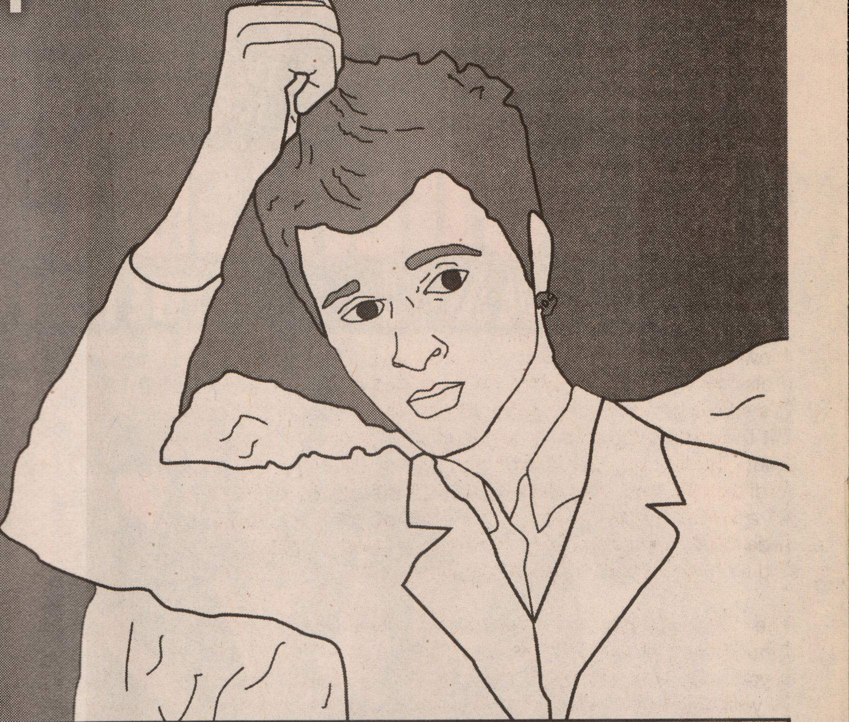

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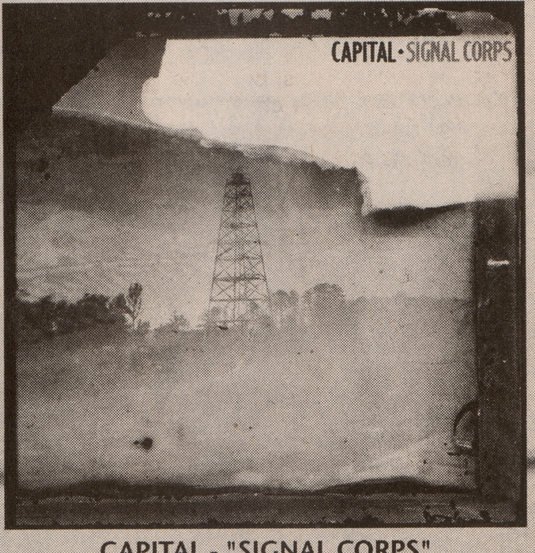

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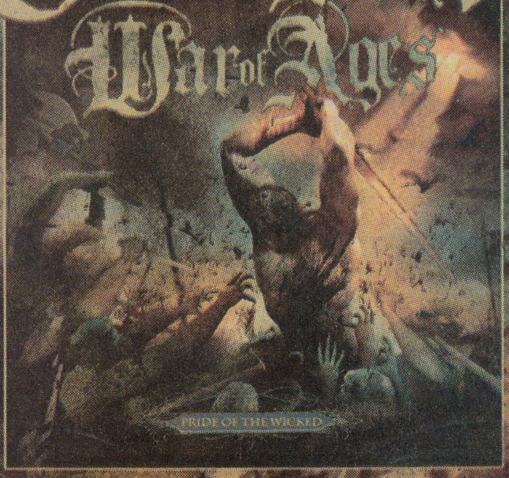
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